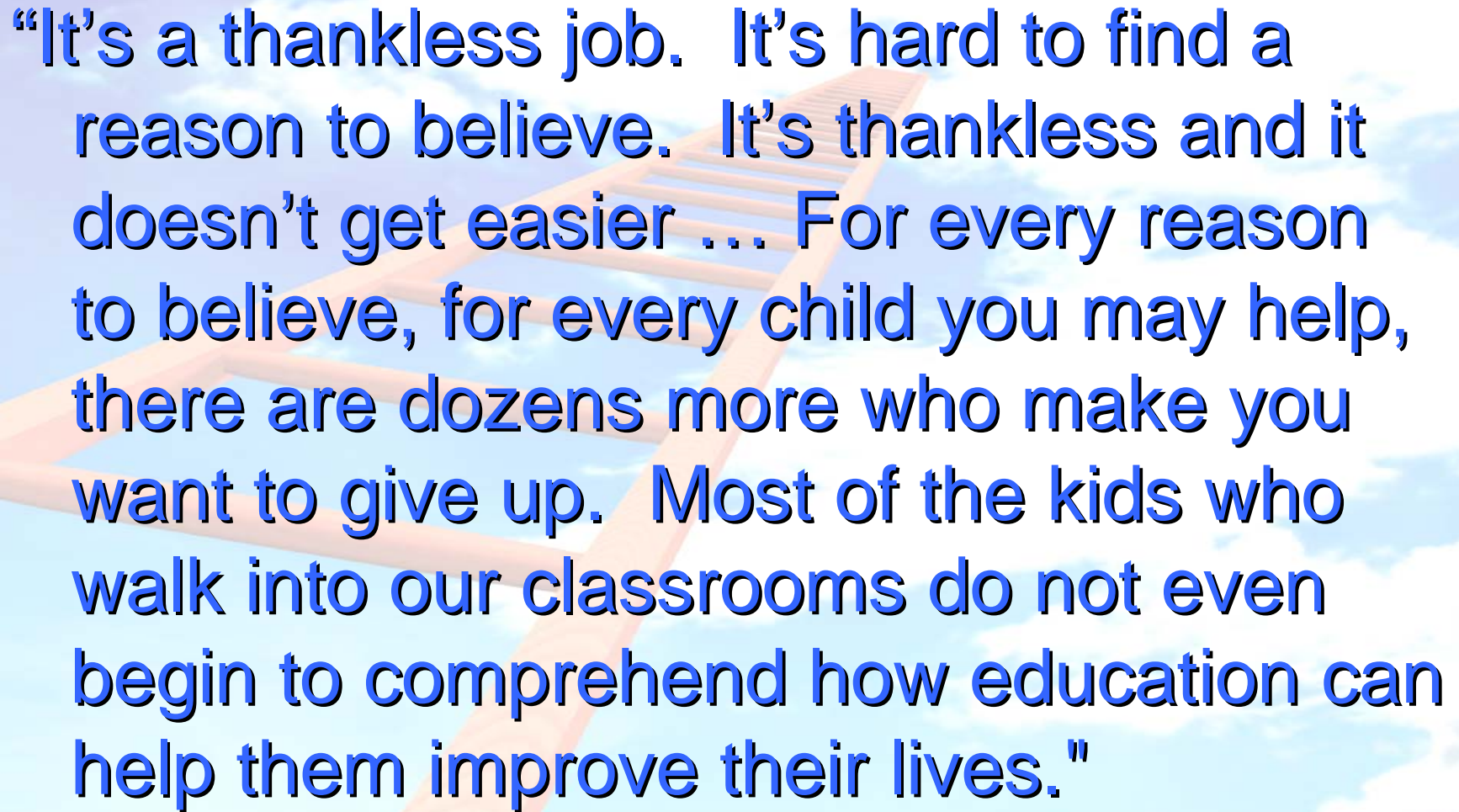


# *Raising the Bar :* *Improving the Educational Experience and Outcomes* *for American Indian Students*

Mandy Smoker Broaddus (Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux)  
Indian Student Achievement Specialist  
Montana Office of Public Instruction



Denise Juneau, Superintendent  
Montana Office of Public Instruction  
[www.opi.mt.gov](http://www.opi.mt.gov)

A wooden ladder is leaning against a blue sky with white clouds. The ladder is made of light-colored wood and is positioned diagonally across the frame. The text is overlaid on the image in a blue, sans-serif font.

“It’s a thankless job. It’s hard to find a reason to believe. It’s thankless and it doesn’t get easier ... For every reason to believe, for every child you may help, there are dozens more who make you want to give up. Most of the kids who walk into our classrooms do not even begin to comprehend how education can help them improve their lives.”

Teach Like Your Hair’s On Fire

Rafe Esquith

honor your Self

# HONOR

**“DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP. I TRULY BELIEVE ONE PERSON—  
A TEACHER, A MENTOR, A FRIEND—CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE.”**

Desi Small-Rodriguez, a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe who grew up in Larne Deer, comes from a family that believes strongly in education. “I was raised with the notion,” she says, “that the way you help your people and the way that you advance and make something of yourself is through education, even if you have to struggle.” So when Desi heard about College Horizons, a non-profit organization that helps Native students learn how to get into college, she jumped at the chance. Thanks to this experience, Desi went on to Stanford, where she received her Bachelor’s degree and then a Master’s degree in Sociology.

Life at Stanford wasn’t easy for Desi at first. “It was a huge culture shock,” she says. “But eventually I realized,” she says, “that if I worked hard, I could master anything that I pursued.” A lot of her strength, Desi admits, comes from appreciating the struggles that came before her. “Knowing that the history of my people, the Cheyenne, is very much a reality today is important,” she says. “Even though it might have happened 100 years ago, it’s still very much current. The history of struggle, of fighting, of being relocated to Oklahoma, walking back in the bitter cold and finally getting the reservation established and being able to live on our homeland. All of this is not history as much as it is our life as Cheyenne people. I take great pride in the struggles my ancestors had to endure for me to be where I am.”

Desi, who is now working in New Zealand on an inaugural tribal research project for the Tainui Maori tribe, plans to continue her work in Indigenous education and policy. “There are a lot of harsh realities and difficult choices that young people face growing up on reservations and in urban communities,” says Desi. “Believing that you’re capable of overcoming the hardships is crucial. Our education system isn’t perfect, but it’s our best chance for providing our children with a bright future and empowering our communities.”

**“I’VE ALWAYS BEEN TOLD BY MY PARENTS THAT THERE ARE GOOD ROLE MODELS AND THERE ARE BAD MODELS... YOU MAKE THAT DECISION FOR YOURSELF. YOU CHOOSE WHICH KIND OF ROLE MODEL YOU WANT TO BE.”**



Desi Small-Rodriguez 22  
Northern Cheyenne  
St. Lawrence Indian School  
Stanford University  
Social Science Researcher



For more information about the poster series go to  
[opi.or.gov/indian@AmericanIndianPosters](http://opi.or.gov/indian@AmericanIndianPosters)



honor your Self

**“There are a lot of harsh realities and difficult choices that young people face growing up on reservations and urban communities. Believing that you’re capable of overcoming hardships is crucial. Our education system isn’t perfect, but it’s our best chance for providing our children with a bright future and empowering our communities.” —**

Desi Small-Rodriguez is a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe who grew up in Little Deer, a town where she believes strongly in education. “I was raised with the values,” she says, “that the way you help your people and the way that you educate and make something of yourself is through education, even if it means going to college.” Desi heard about College Horizons, a program that helps Native students learn how to get into college. “It was a great experience,” she says. “I was able to earn my Bachelor’s degree and then a Master’s degree in Sociology.”

Life at Standford wasn’t easy for Desi at first. “It was a huge culture shock,” she says. “But eventually I realized,” she says, “that if I worked hard, I could master anything that I pursued.” A lot of her strength, Desi admits, comes from overcoming the struggles that came before her. “I remember that a lot of my struggles that came before her, I was struggling with the idea of being a Native woman, and being a Native woman and finally getting the reservation established and being able to live on our homeland. All of this is not history as much as it is our life as Cheyenne people. I take great pride in the struggles my ancestors had to endure for me to be where I am.”

Desi, who is now working in New Zealand on an inaugural trial research project for the Taniwha Māori tribe, plans to continue her work in Indigenous education and policy. “There are a lot of harsh realities and difficult choices that young people face growing up on reservations and in urban communities,” she says. “I hope that you can continue to work on these issues and help our communities.”

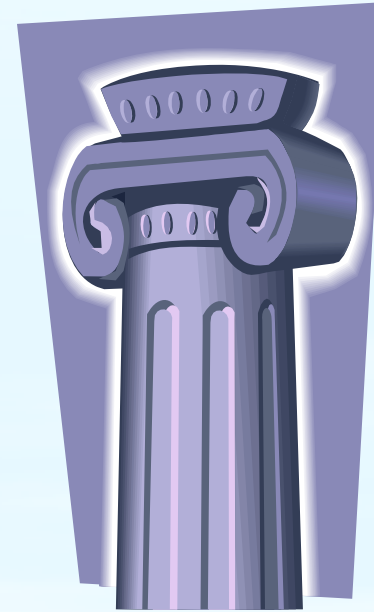
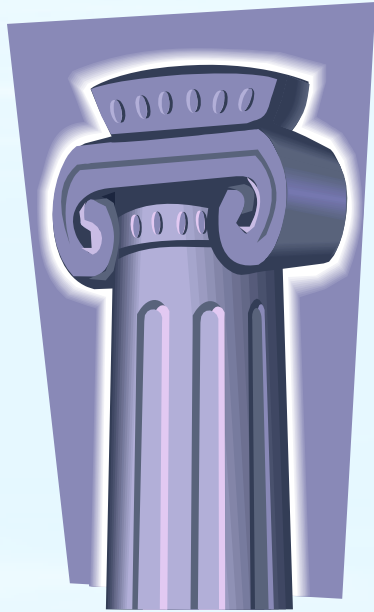
“I’VE ALWAYS BEEN TOLD BY MY PARENTS THAT THERE ARE GOOD ROLE MODELS AND THERE ARE BAD MODELS. YOU MAKE THAT DECISION FOR YOURSELF. YOU CHOOSE WHICH KIND OF ROLE MODEL YOU WANT TO BE.”



Desi Small-Rodriguez  
Northern Cheyenne  
St. Lukes Indian School  
Stanford University  
Social Science Researcher

**Indian Student Achievement**

**Indian Education For All**



**Indian Education Division**

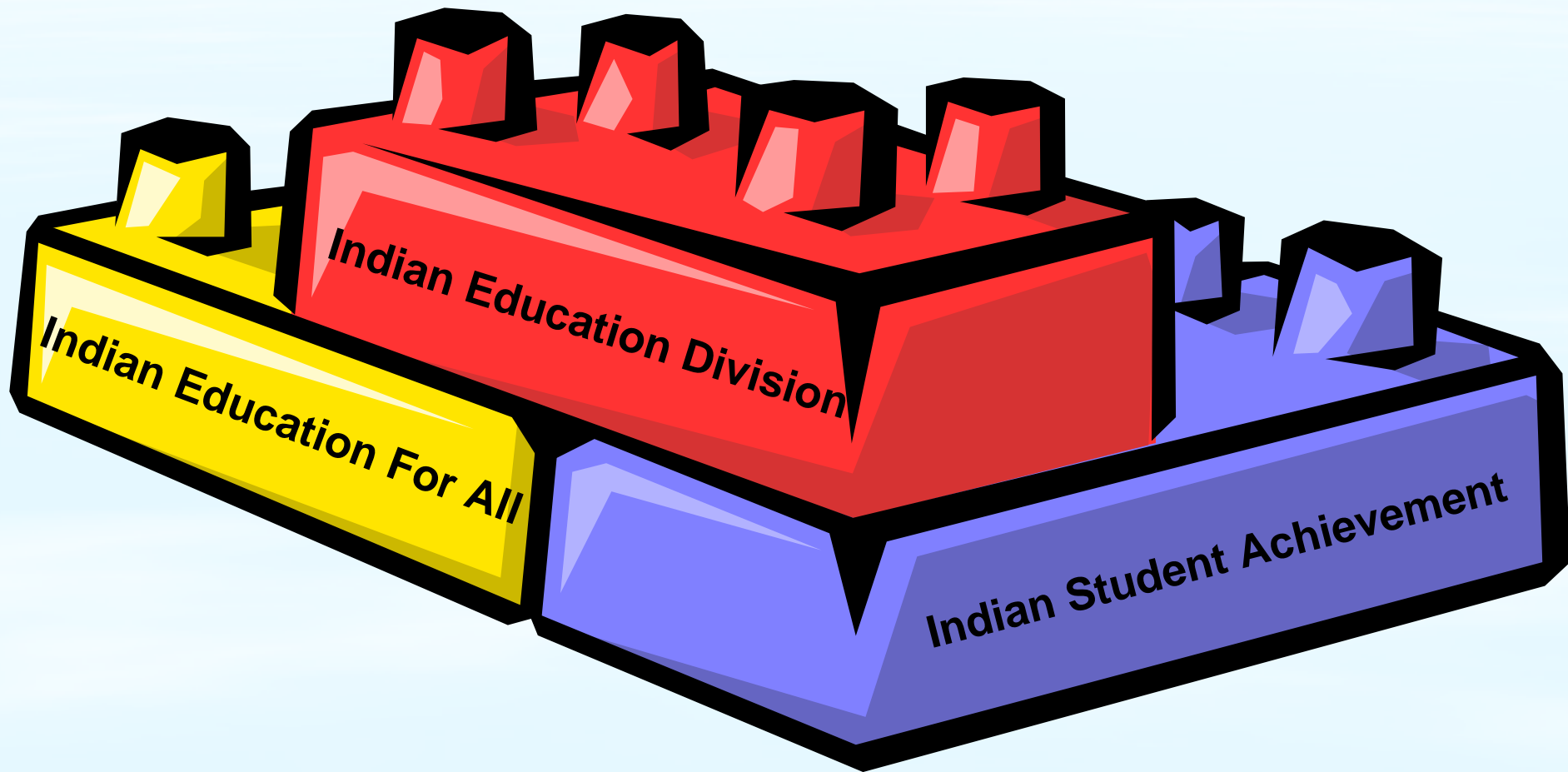
# Montana Constitution

## Article X



### Section 1. Educational goals and duties.

- (1) It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full educational potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state.
- (2) The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.



Indian Education Division

Indian Education For All

Indian Student Achievement

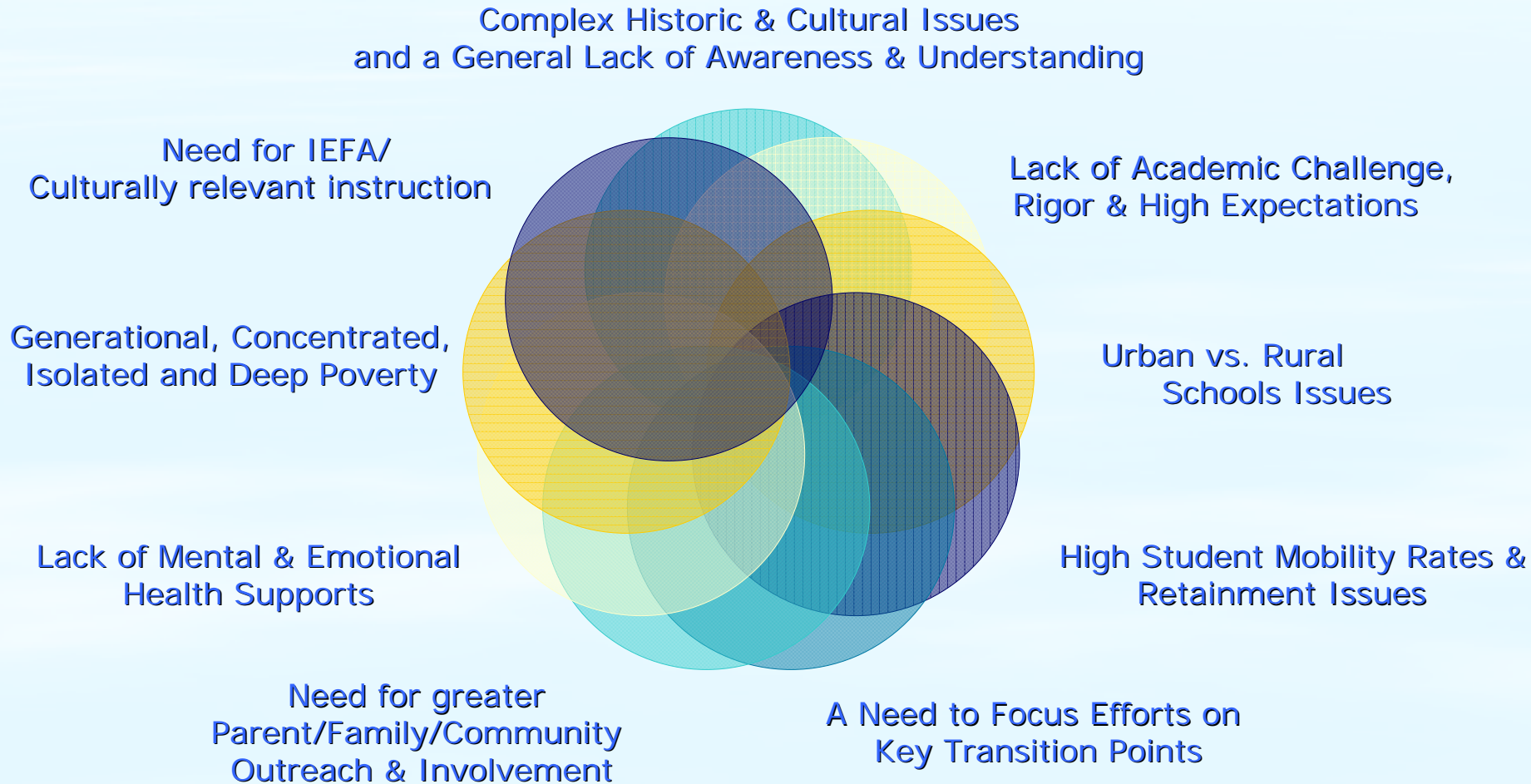


"Education is not the filling of a vessel,  
but the kindling of a flame."

Socrates



# Achievement Gap Issues & Factors to Consider





What does the achievement gap  
look like overall in Montana?

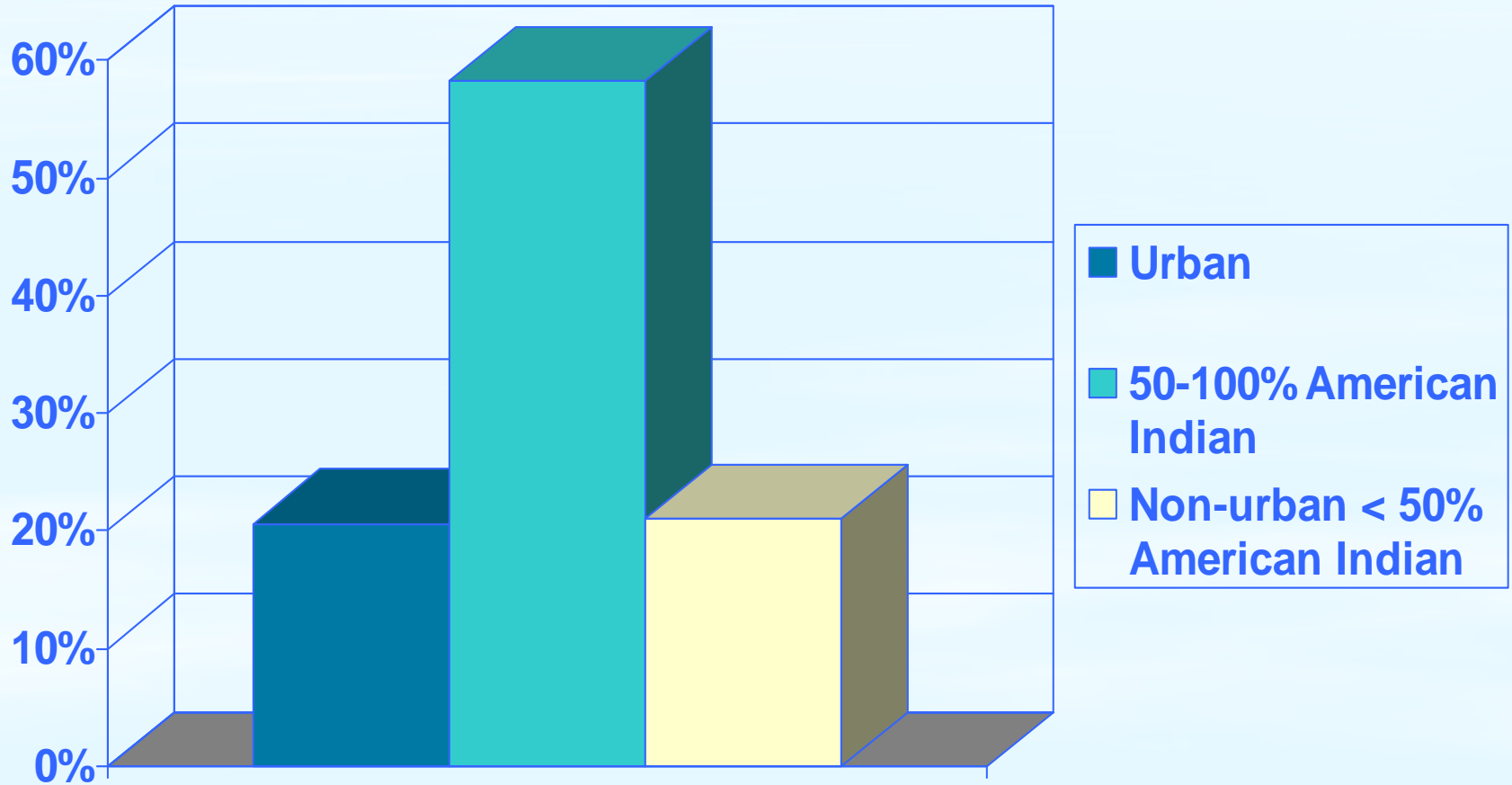
*Notable gains are being made,*

*but there is still much work to be done*

# Types of Data We Will Cover

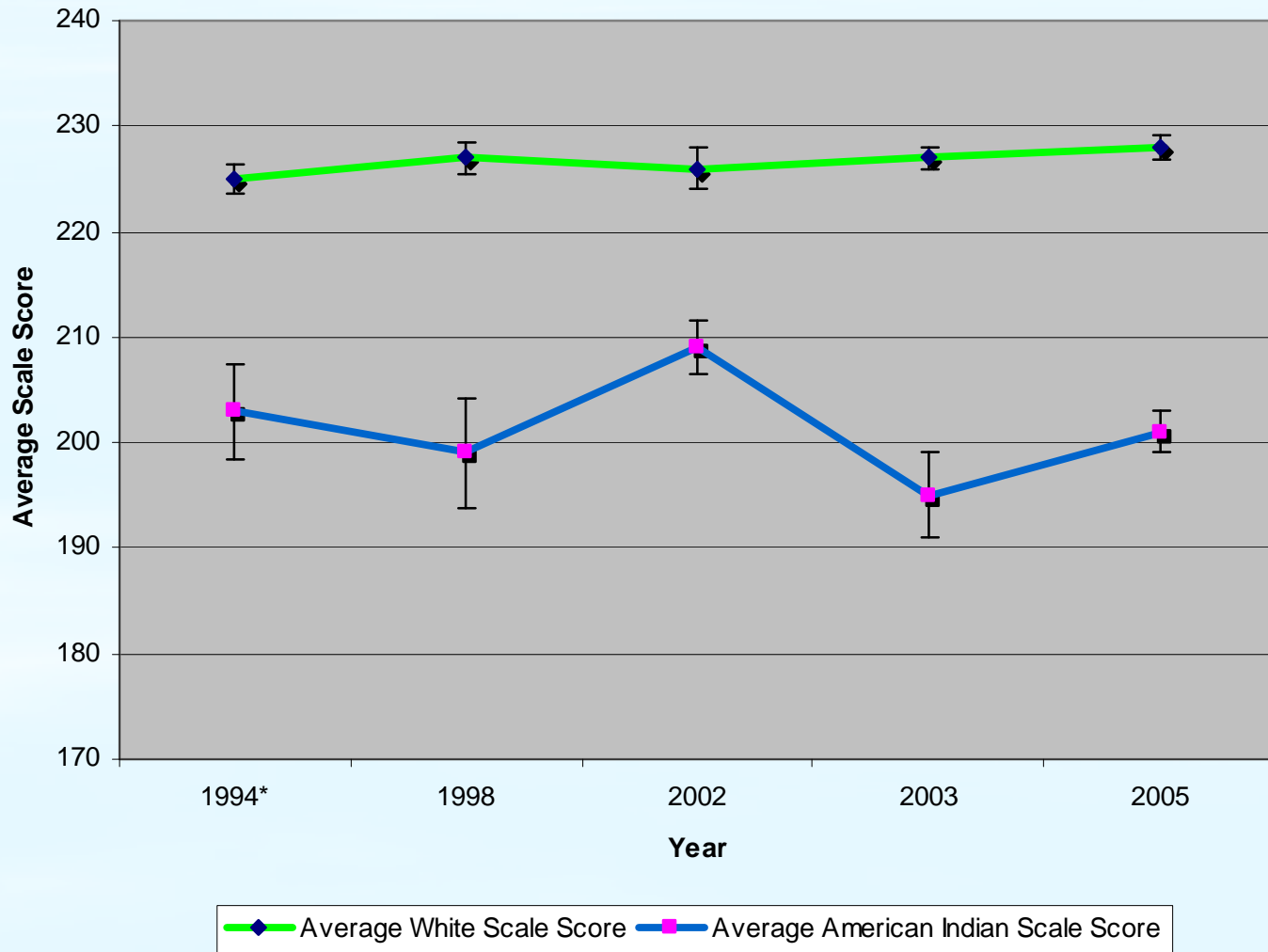
- Enrollment Data
- National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)
- Criterion Reference Test (CRT)
- Reading First Data
- Adequate Yearly Progress Information
- Dropout Rates
- Completion Rates
- Advanced Placement (AP), PSAT & SAT Data
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data (YRBS)

# Statewide American Indian Enrollment



# National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Performance Over Time

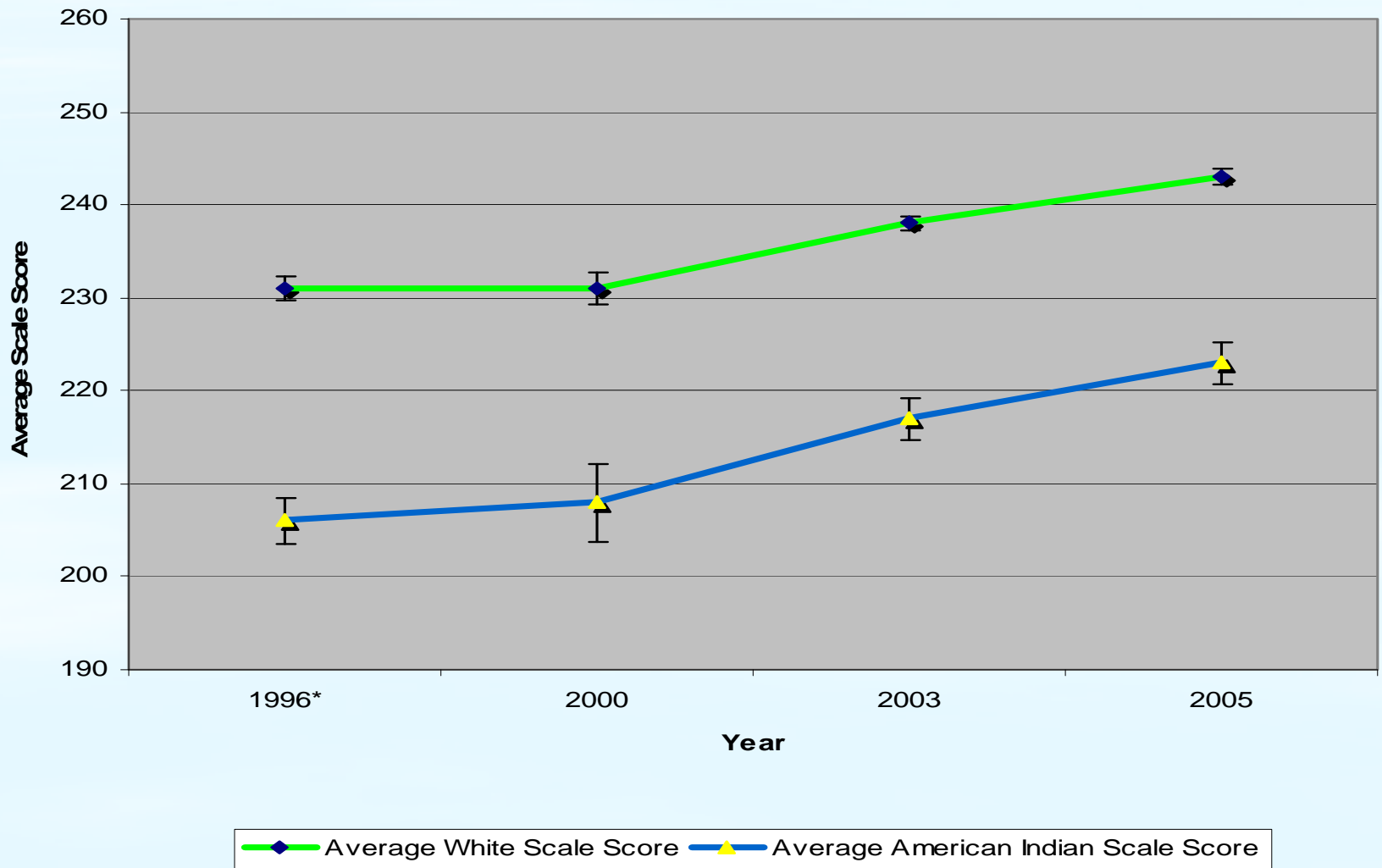
## Montana Average Scale Score Grade 4 Reading





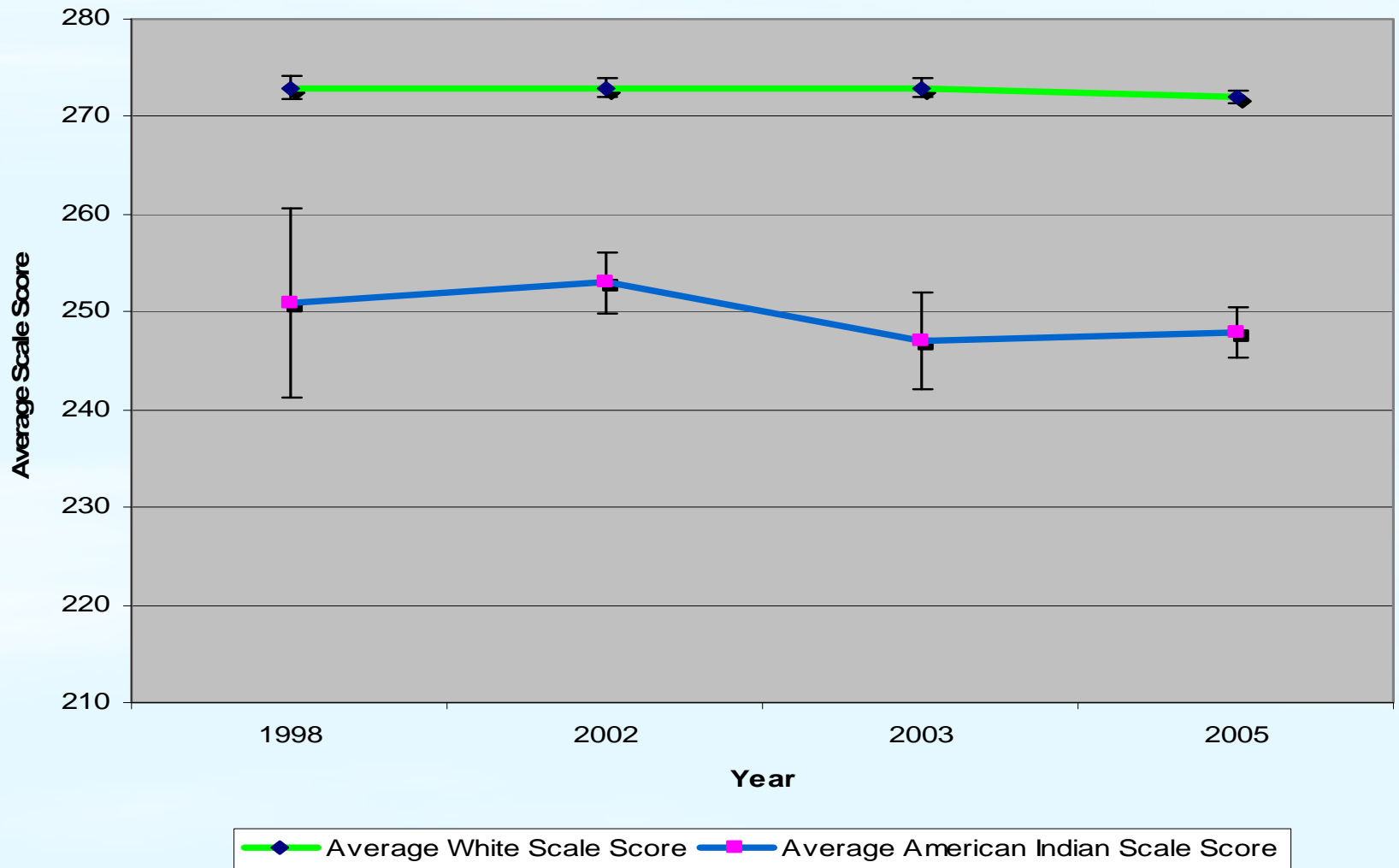
# More NAEP

## Montana Average Scale Score Grade 4 Mathematics



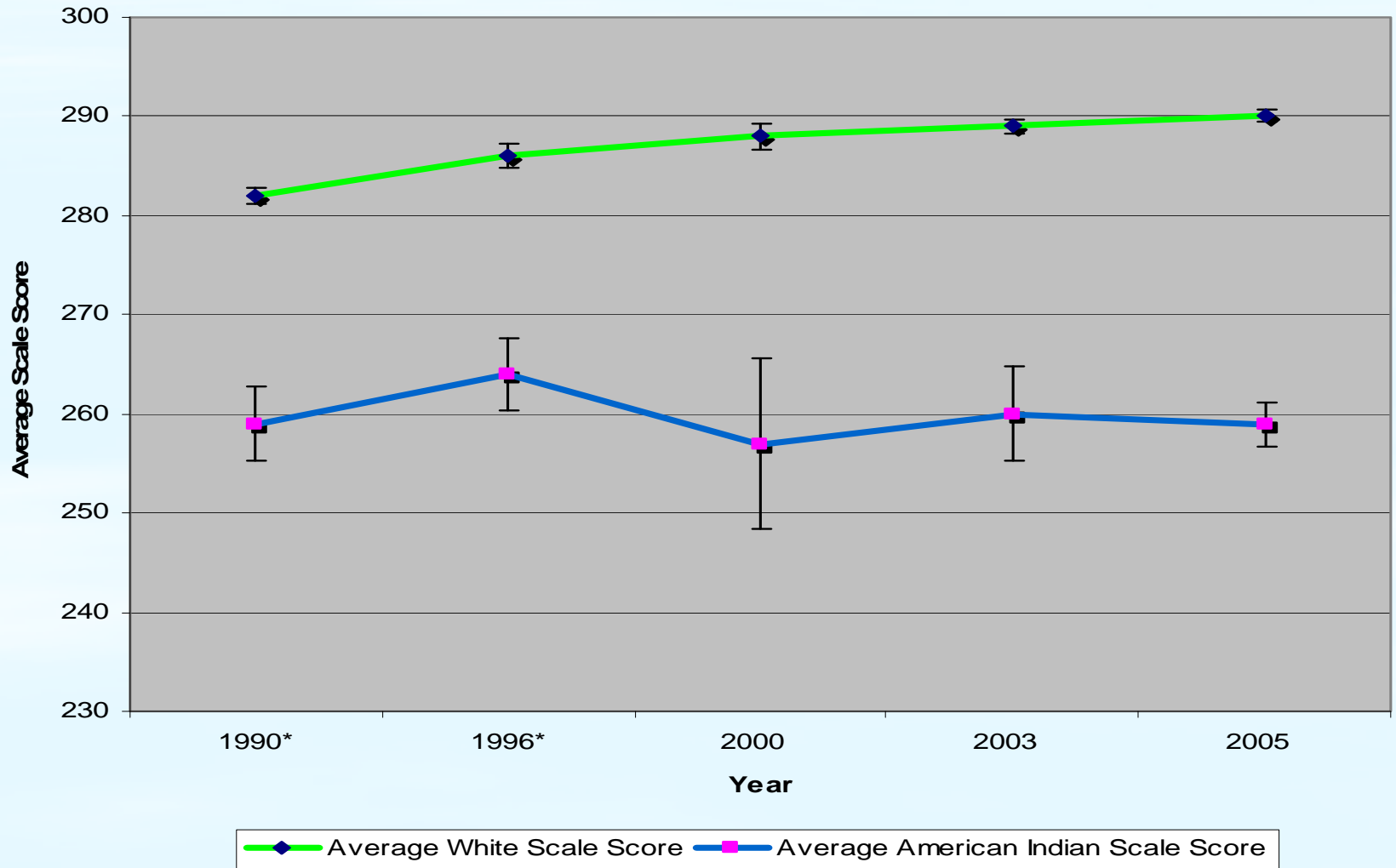
# More NAEP

## Montana Average Scale Score Grade 8 Reading



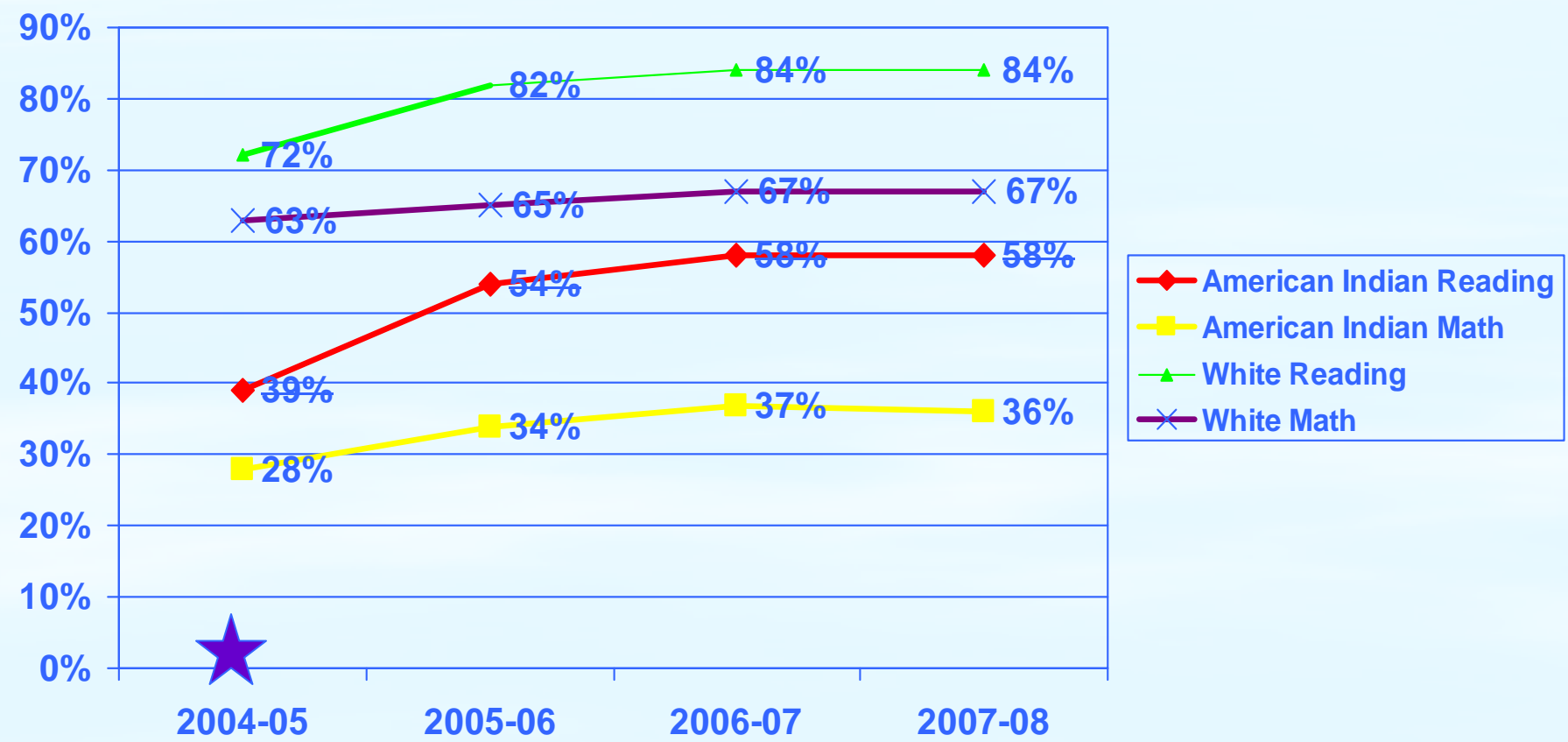
# More NAEP

## Montana Average Scale Score Grade 8 Mathematics

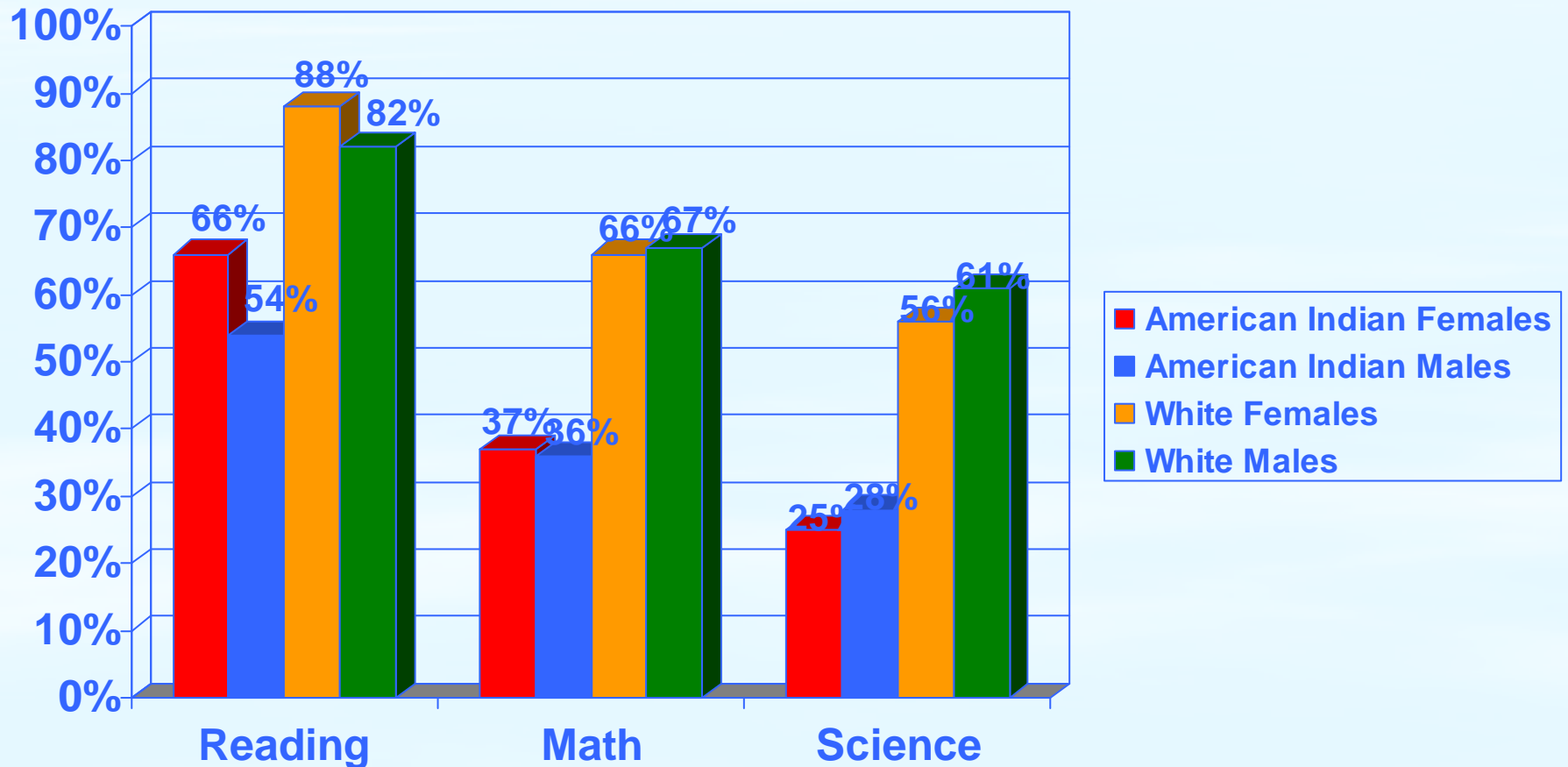


# Criterion Reference Test 3 Year Trend Data

Percent Proficient & Advanced, by Race/Ethnicity, All Grades Combined



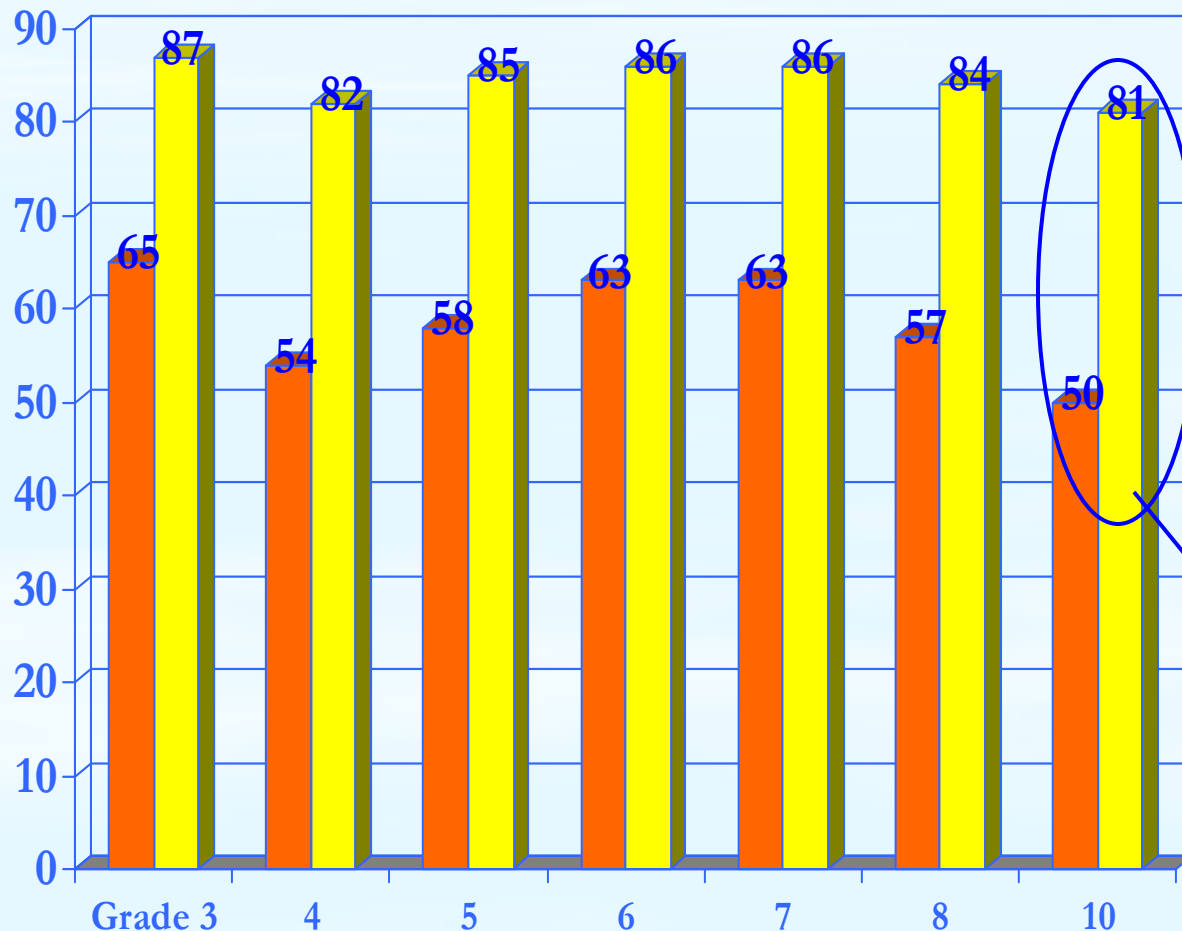
# 2007-08 CRT Data by Race/Ethnicity & Gender





# 2007-08 CRT Reading Scores

## Proficient & Advanced Percentages



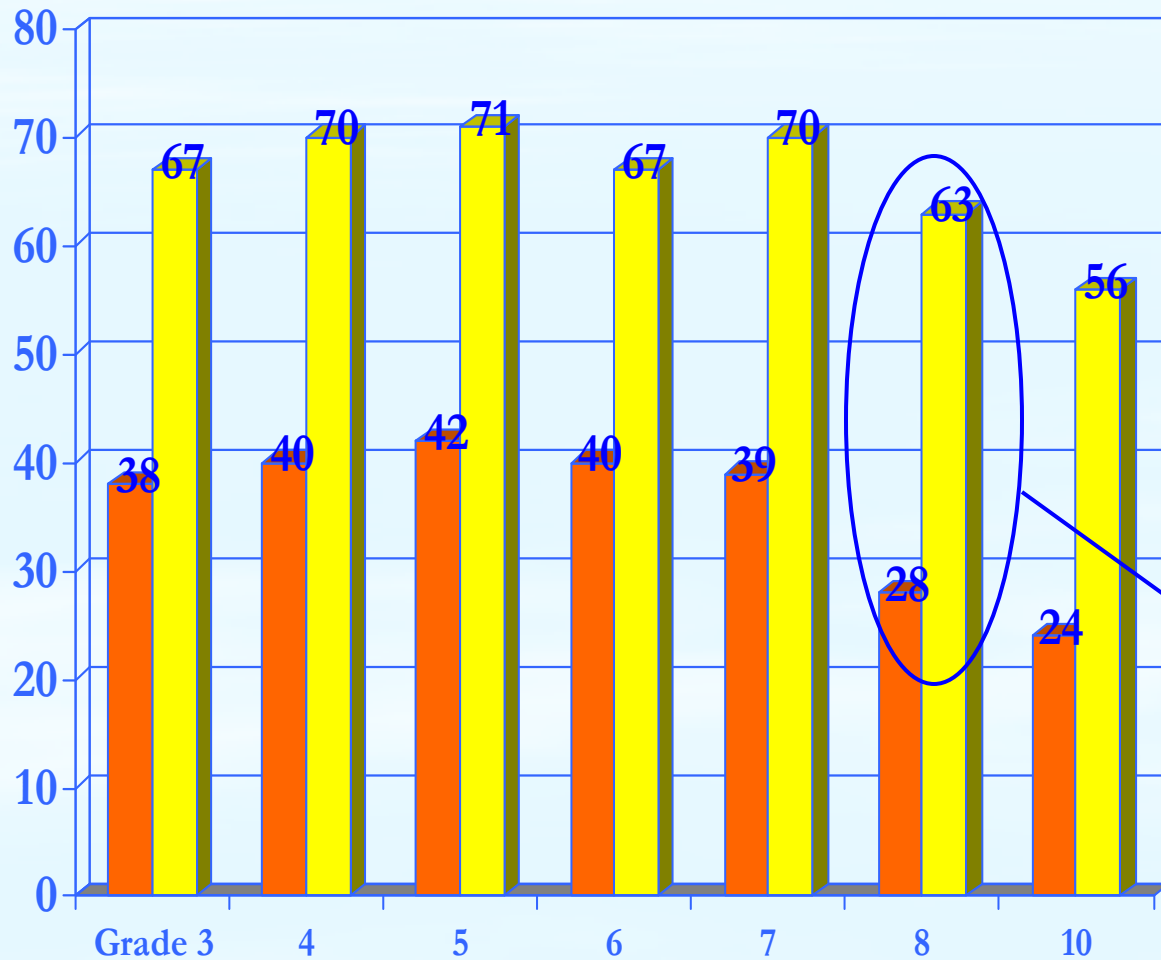
American Indian students in grades 4, 5 & 10 all saw declines in proficiency from 06-07 rates

American Indian Students  
White Students

Largest gap now exists in 10<sup>th</sup> grade (7<sup>th</sup> grade in 06-07)

# 2007-08 CRT Math Scores

## Proficient & Advanced Percentages



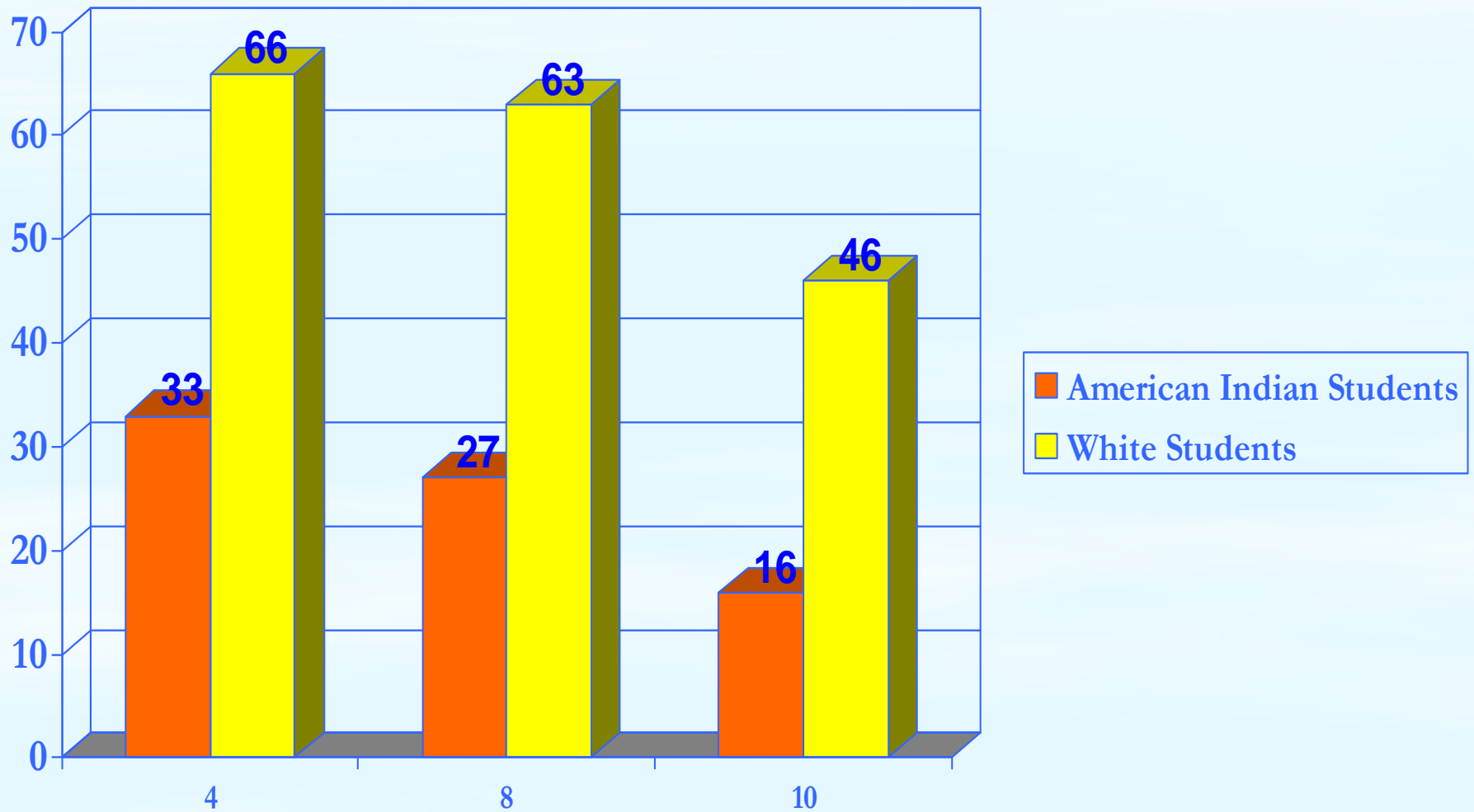
American Indian students in grades 3, 4, 8 & 10 all saw declines in proficiency from 06-07 rates

American Indian Students  
White Students

Largest gap of 35% - consistent over two years

# 2007-08 CRT Science Scores

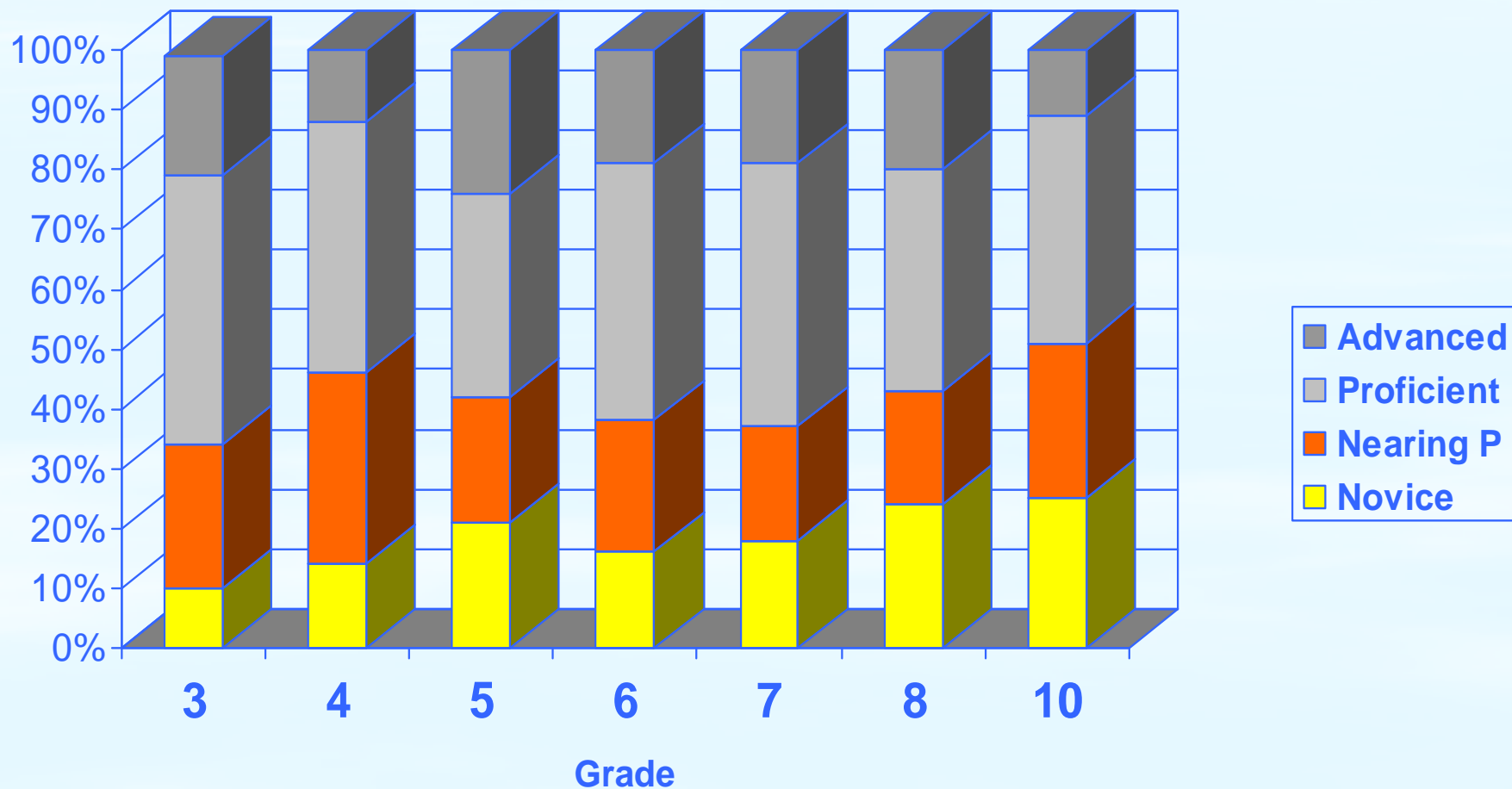
Proficient and Advanced Percentages



# 2007-08 American Indian CRT Data

## Novice and Nearing Proficient Rates

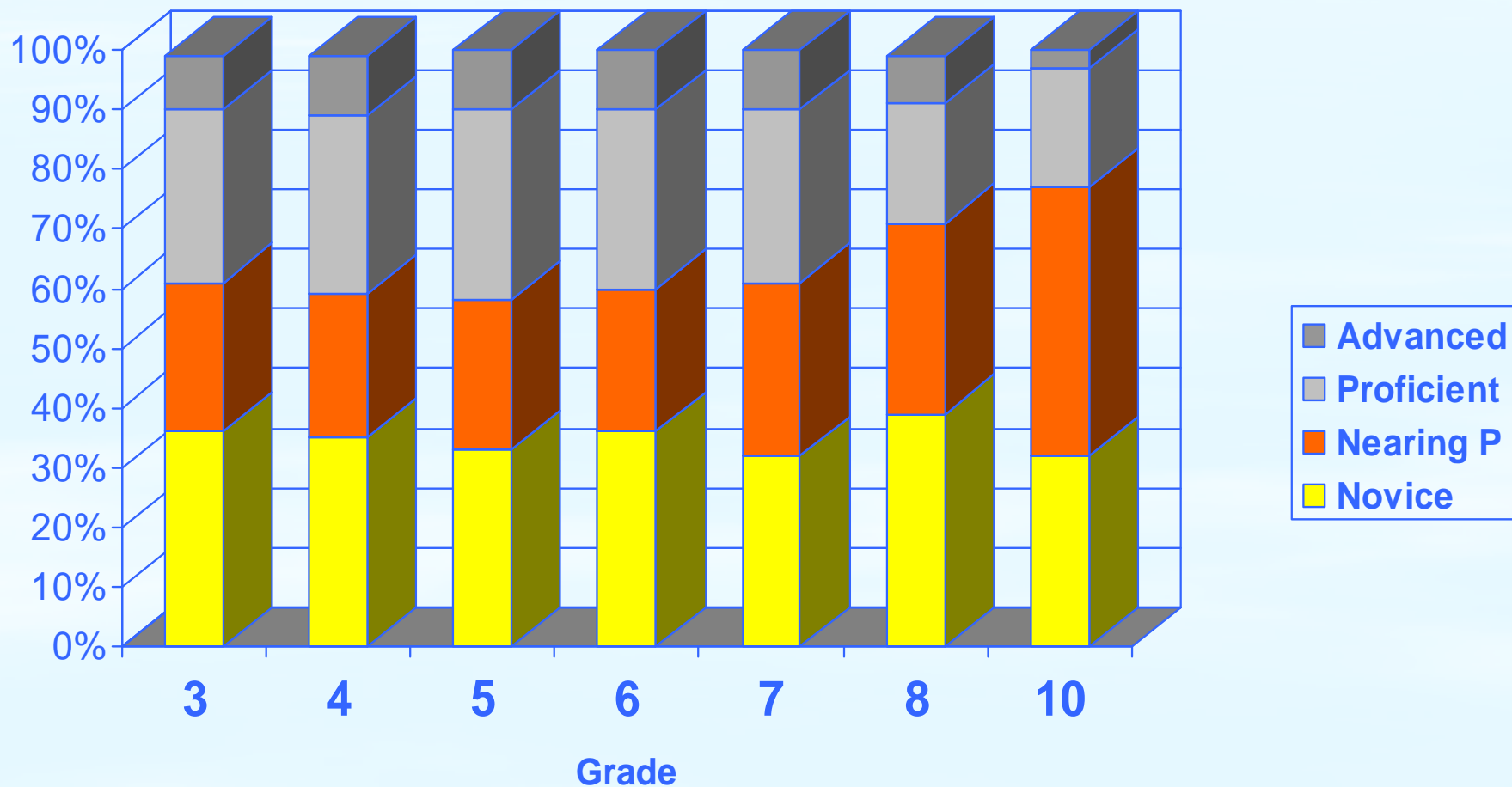
### Reading



# 2007-08 American Indian CRT Data

## Novice and Nearing Proficient Rates

### Math

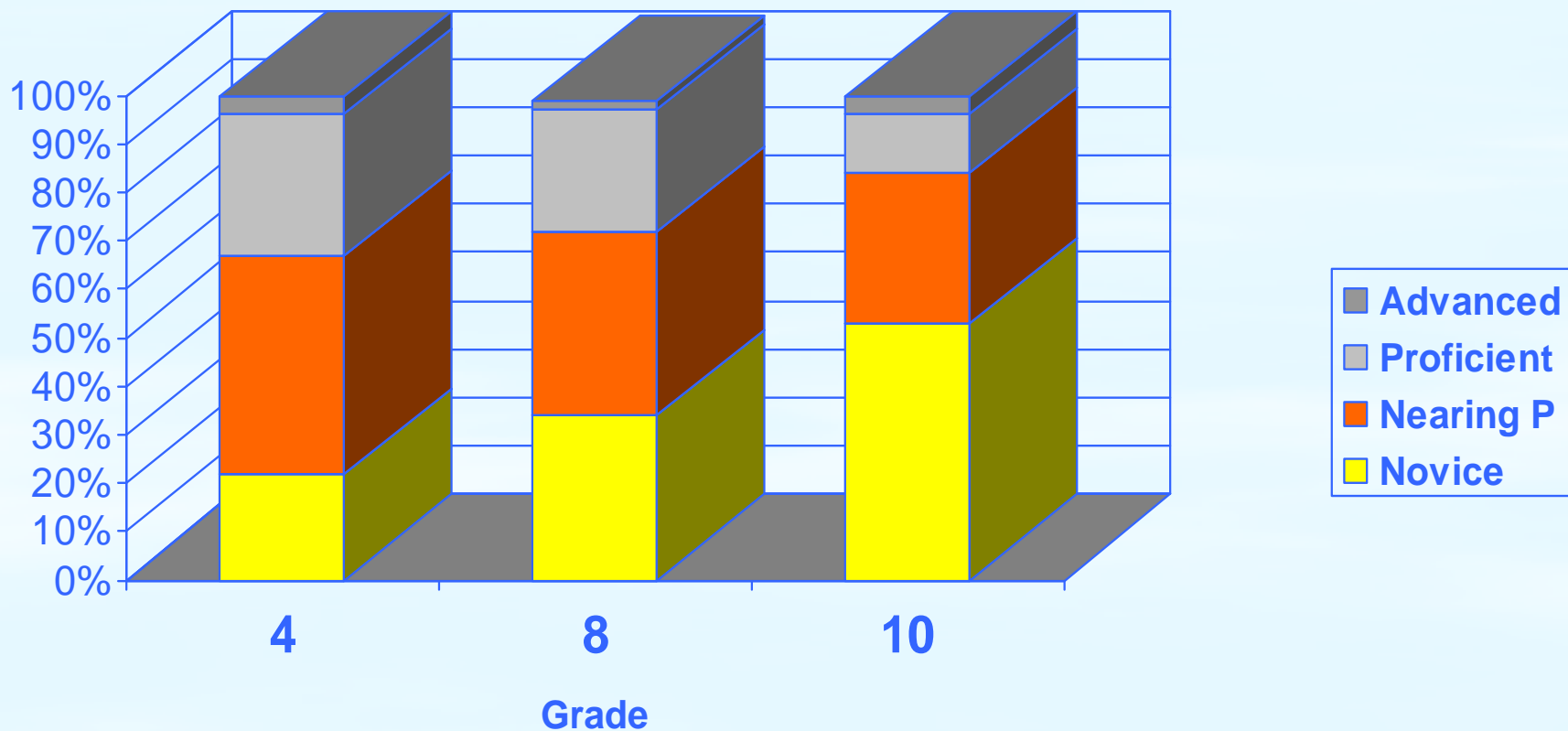




# 2007-08 American Indian CRT Data

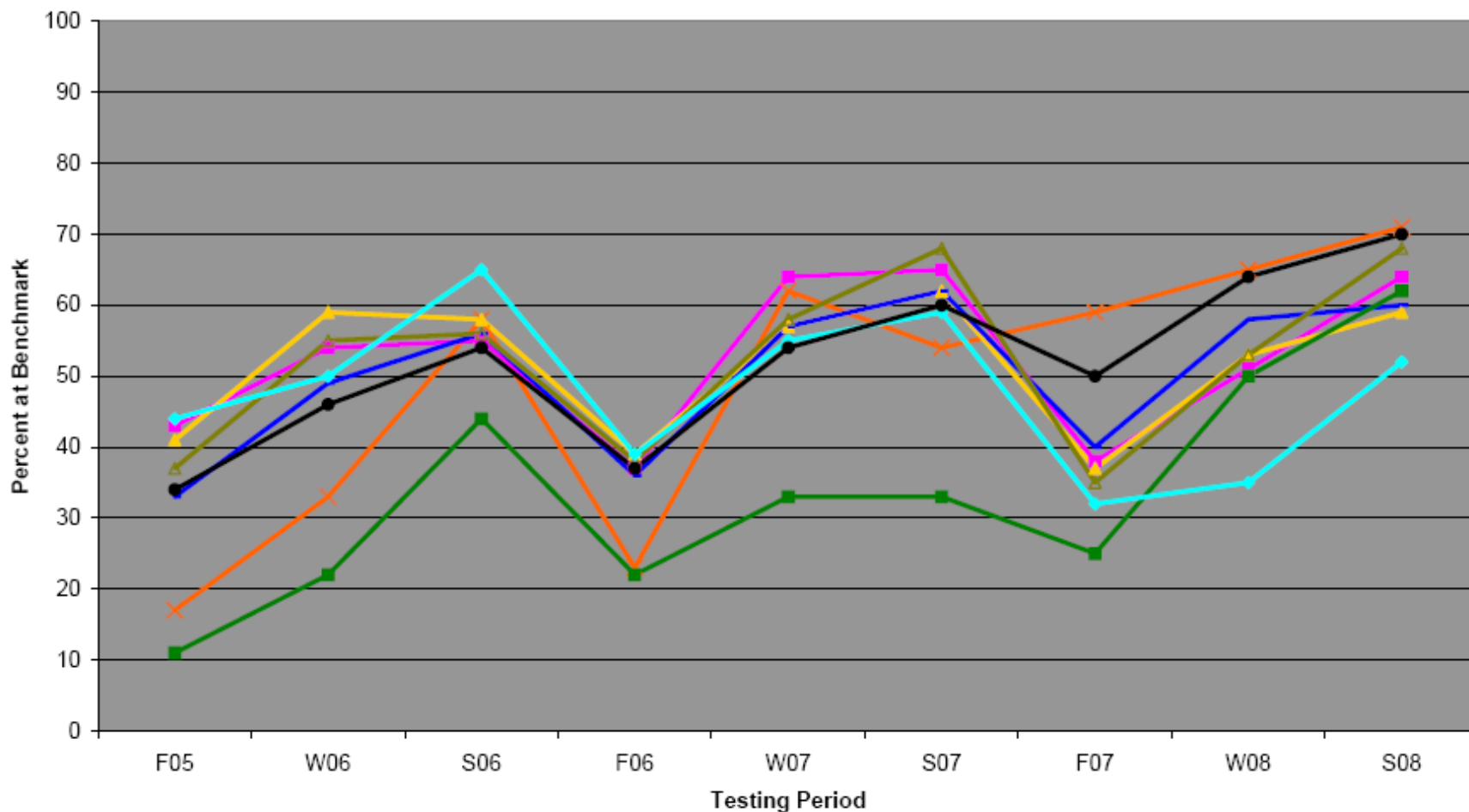
## Novice and Nearing Proficient Rates

### Science



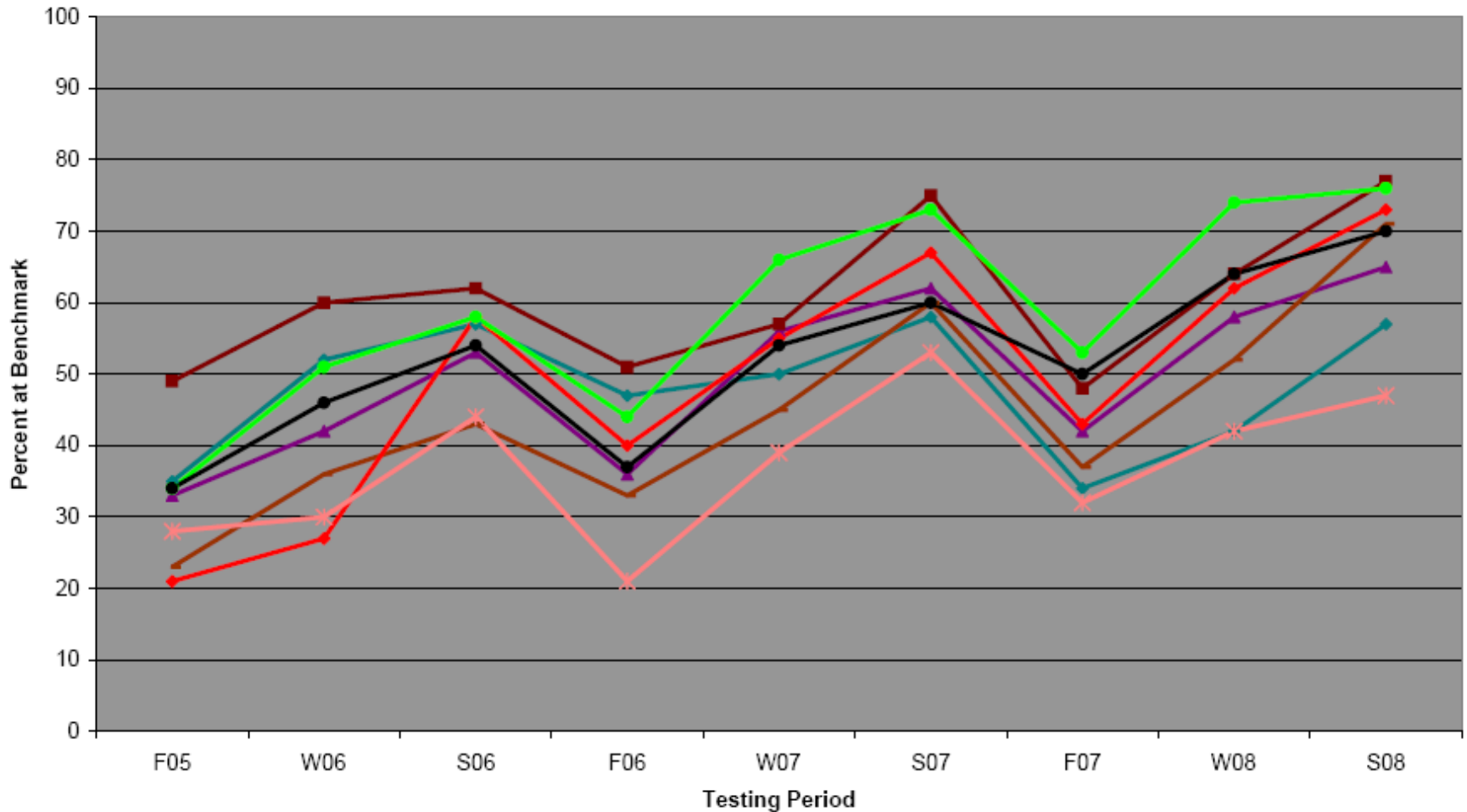
# Reading First School Level Data

50 - 75% of K - 3 Population American Indian  
DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)



# More Reading First Data

95 - 100% of K - 3 Population American Indian  
DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)



# 2008 AYP Determinations

- **36 of 37 schools** identified for Restructuring Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 are ones with 50-100% American Indian populations
- **23 districts** with 50-100% American Indian populations comprise all the schools in Corrective Action Years 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7



# 2008 AYP Celebrations!

(50-100% American Indian populations)

## Schools that made AYP for first year:

- KW Bergan
- Vina Chattin
- Harlem Elementary
- Wolf Point 7-8

## Schools that continue to make AYP for 2+ years:

- Babb School
- Wyola 7-8
- Fort Smith
- Arlee High School
- Dixon Elementary
- Ashland 7-8
- Box Elder 7-8
- Box Elder High School

## Districts that made AYP for first year:

- Brockton Elementary
- Frazer Elementary

## Districts that continue to make AYP for 2+ years:

- Arlee High School
- Box Elder High School





# 2008 AYP Celebrations!

(50-100% American Indian populations)

## Schools which had gains of 10% or more in reading / math

■	Brockton	8 & 10 Reading
■	Frazer	10 Reading & 10 Math
■	Heart Butte	5 & 10 Reading
■	Hays Lodge Pole	4 & 7 Reading
■	Lame Deer	3 & 7 Reading
■		3, 4 & 6 Math
■	Harlem	5, 6, 7 & 8 Reading
■		5 & 6 Math
■	Poplar	7 Reading
■	Rocky Boy	6, 7 & 10 Reading
■		5 Math
■	Wolf Point	7 Reading
■		6 Math
■	Crow Agency	3 Reading
■	Hardin	5 Reading
■		4 & 5 Math
■	Box Elder	3 & 8 Reading
■		4, 5, 8 Math
■	Pryor/Plenty Coups	8 & 10 Reading
■	Lodge Grass	7 Reading

# Data “High Points” for American Indian Students

- Bozeman has the highest reading proficiency rates in 2008 among the urban districts at any one grade level – 91% in 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Colstrip, compared to districts with similar population sizes, has the highest math proficiency for American Indian students, all grades combined – 49%
- Billings was the only urban district to see gains at the middle school and high school level (7, 8 & 10) for three consecutive years in reading
- Hot Springs has the highest American Indian reading AND math proficiency rates, all grades combined, among schools on a reservation— 93% & 55% respectively
- Charlo has the highest American Indian science proficiency rates, all grades combined, among schools on a reservation – 57%
- With the exception of schools on the Flathead Reservation, Box Elder has seen the steadiest and highest gains in both reading and math over three year among schools with 50-100% American Indian populations.

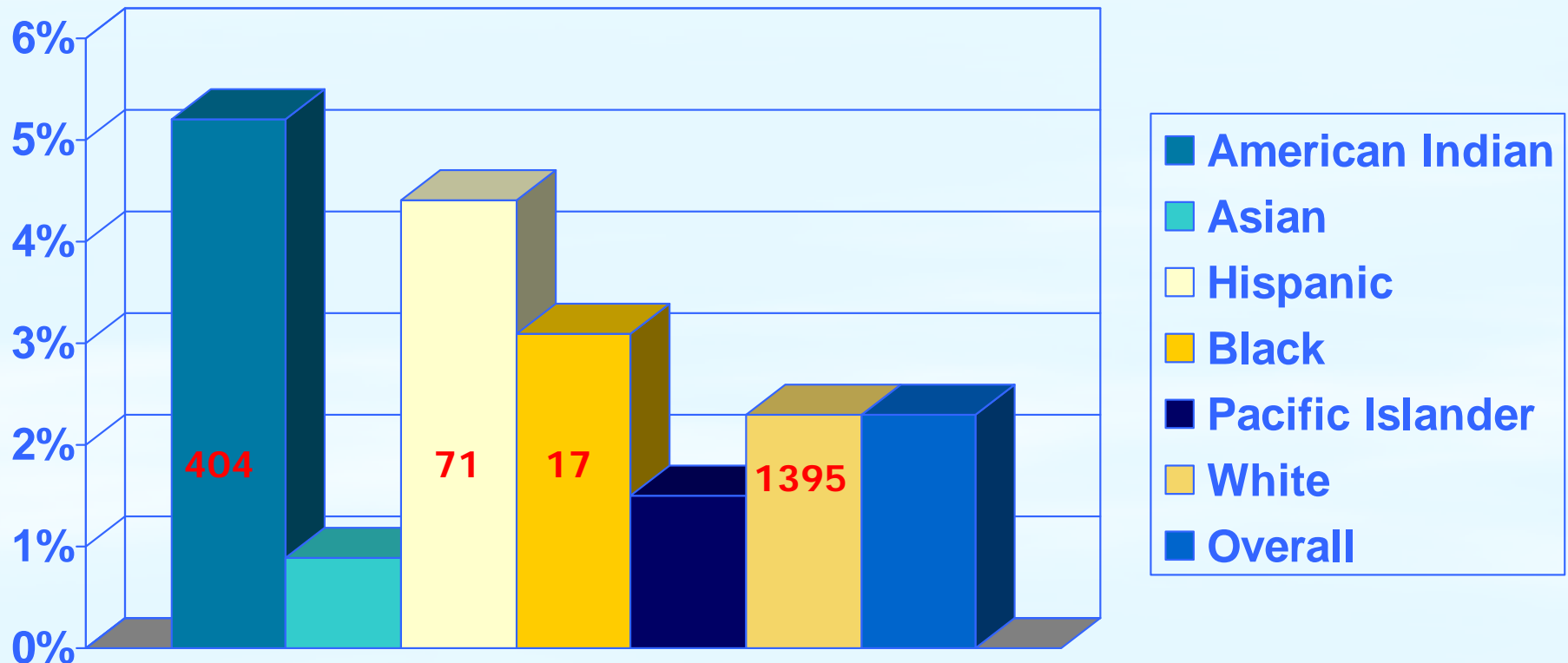
# *Dropout Rates*

*In Montana, of those students who entered school as 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2003, an estimated 3,074 students dropped out. If these students had graduated, their total lifetime additional income would have been **\$799,180,200.***

Alliance for Excellent Education

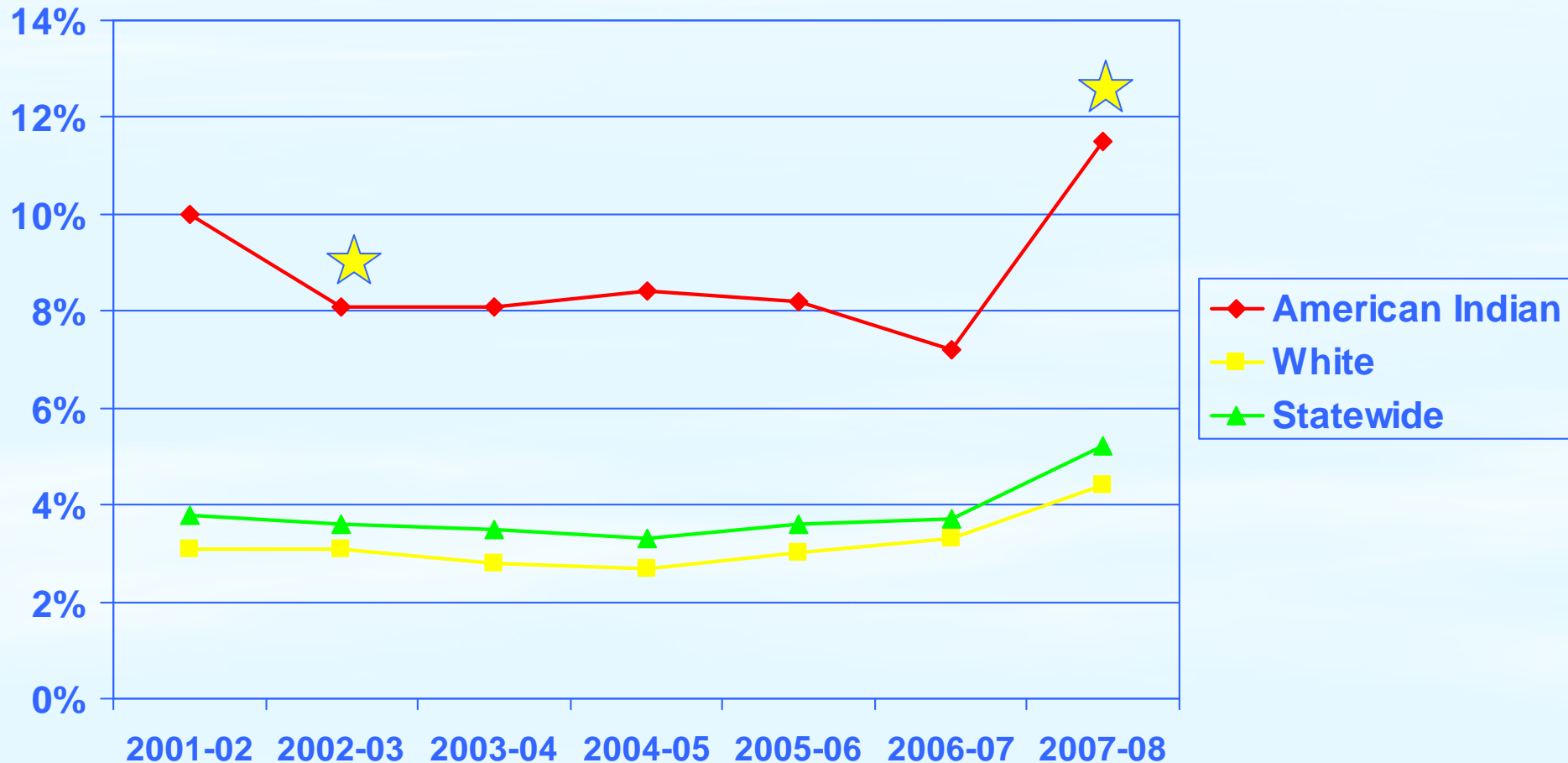
# 2006-07 Montana Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity Categories

## Total Dropout % Grades 7-12

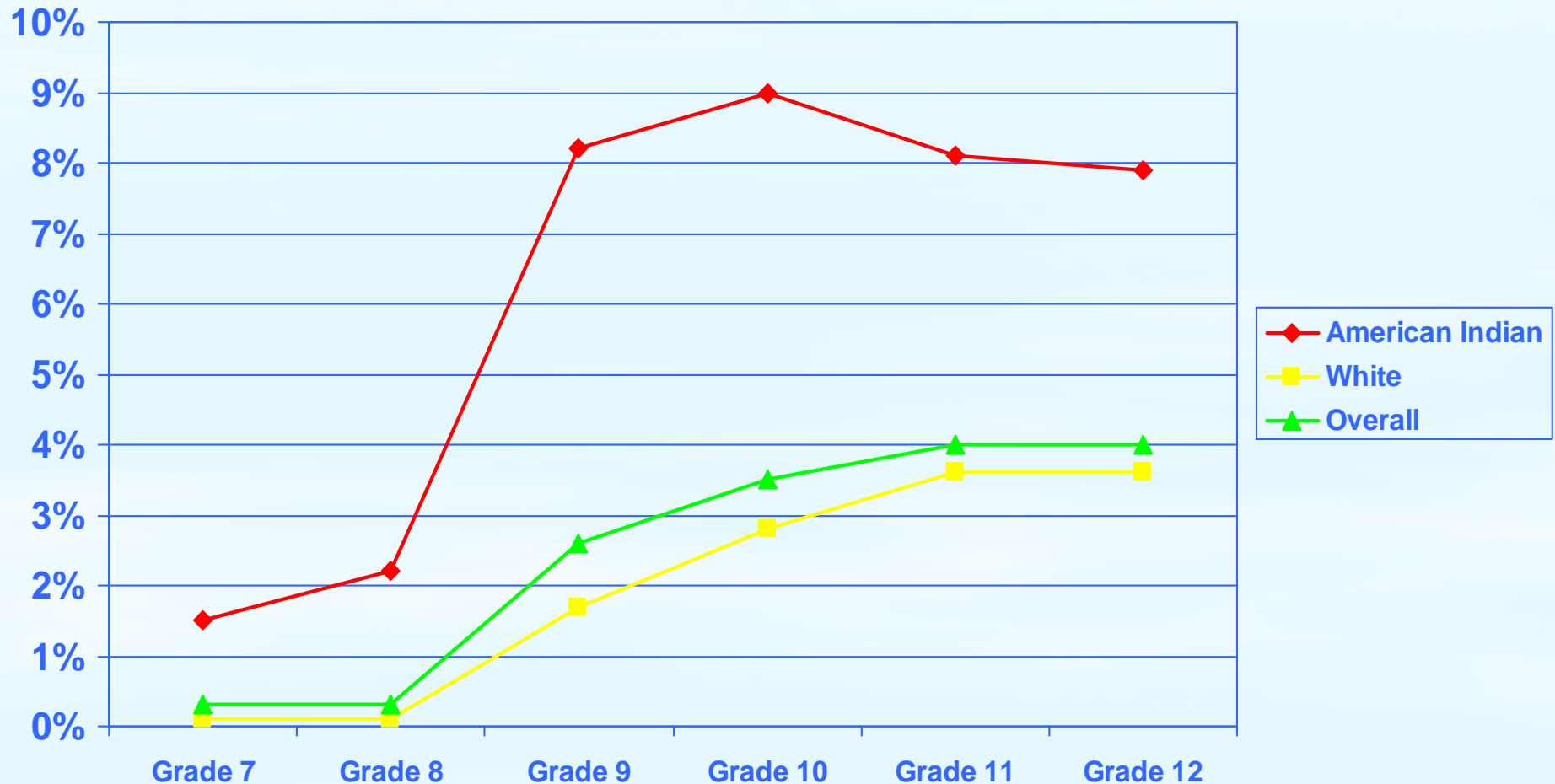


# Seven Year Montana High School Dropout Rate Trends

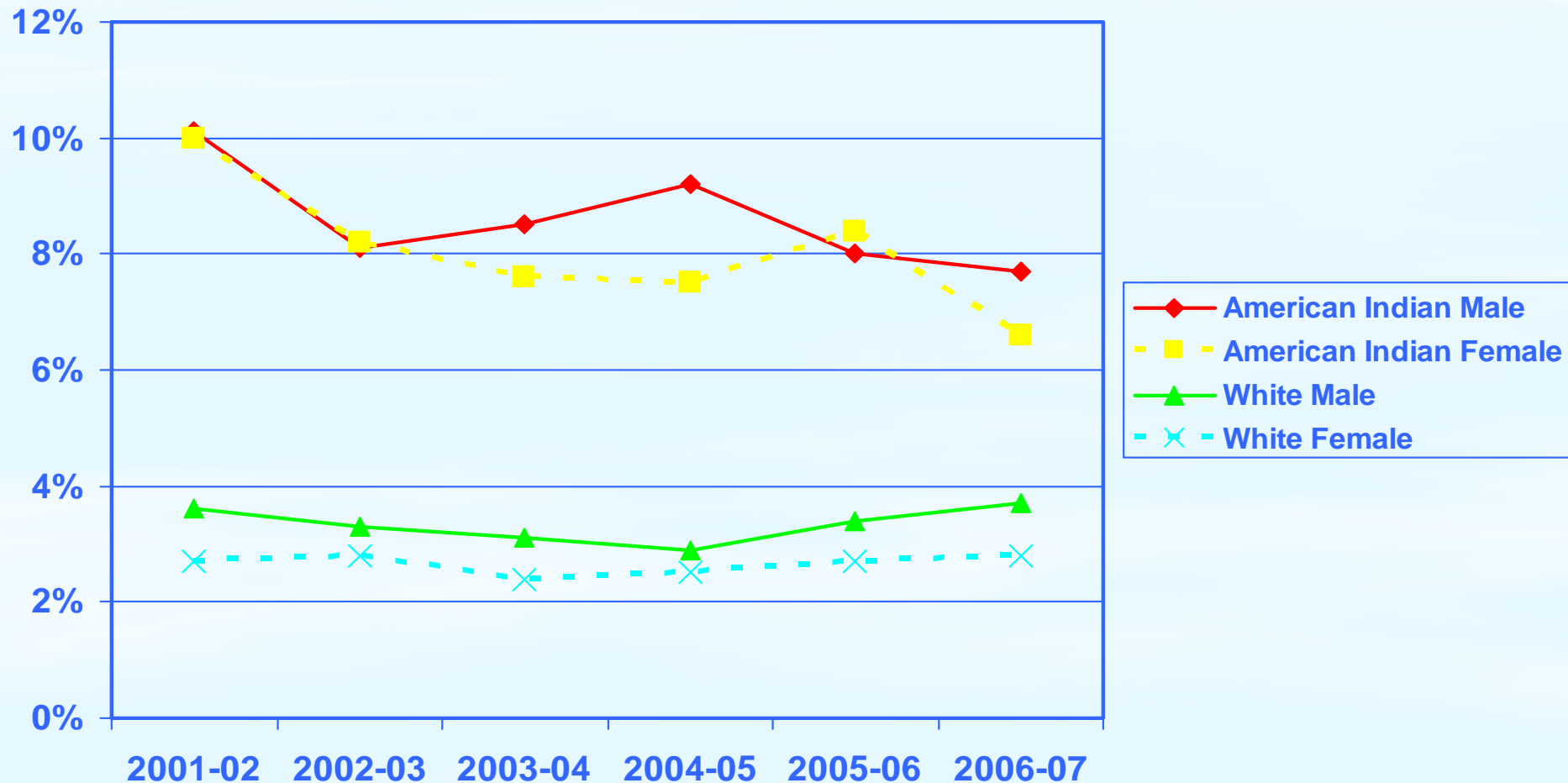
## by Race/Ethnicity Categories



# Statewide Five Year Dropout Rates (2002-2007) for Race/Ethnicity Categories and by Grade Level

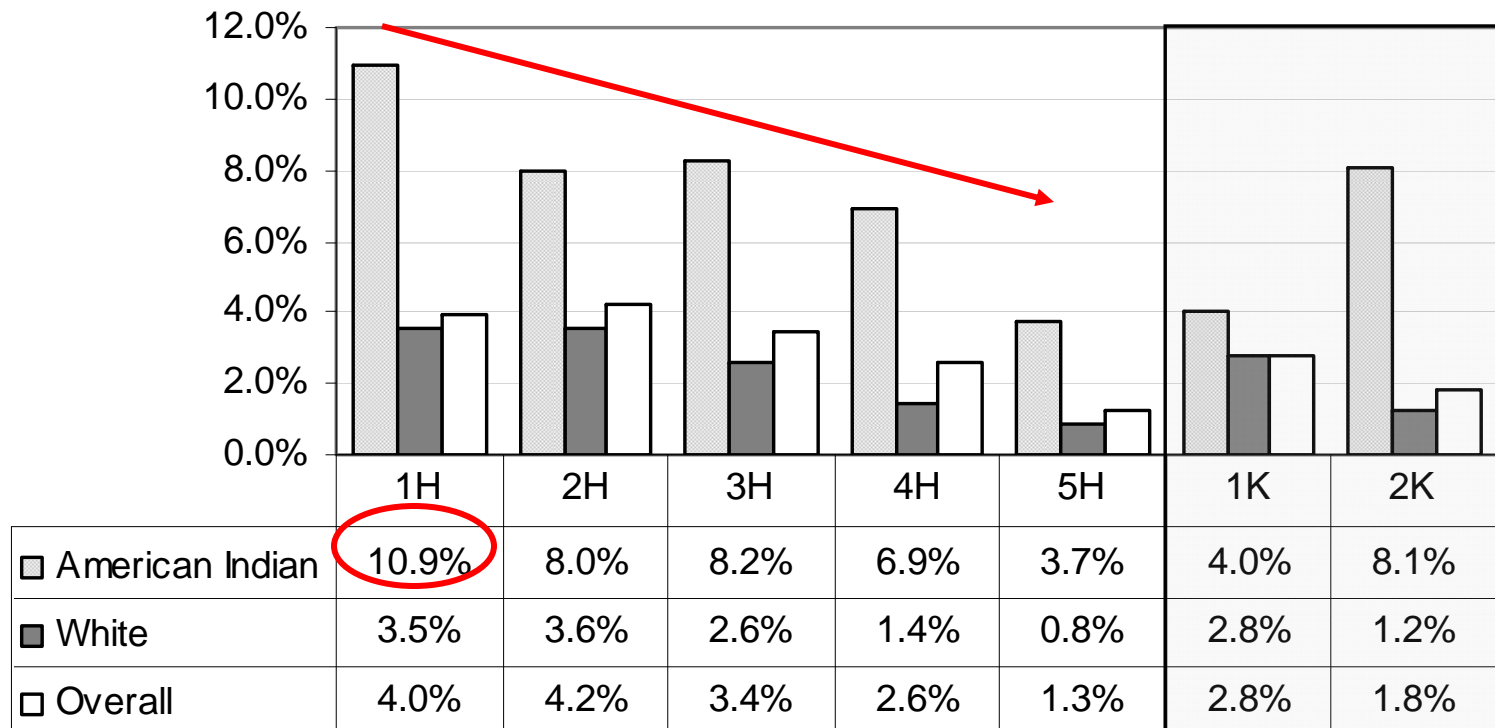


# Dropout Rates for Race/Ethnicity Categories by Gender for Grades 9-12



# MT Dropout Rate by District Size and Race/Ethnicity

**Figure 16: Five-Year Dropout Rates by District Size Category for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 9-12 2002-03 to 2006-07**





# Class of 2007 Completion Rate

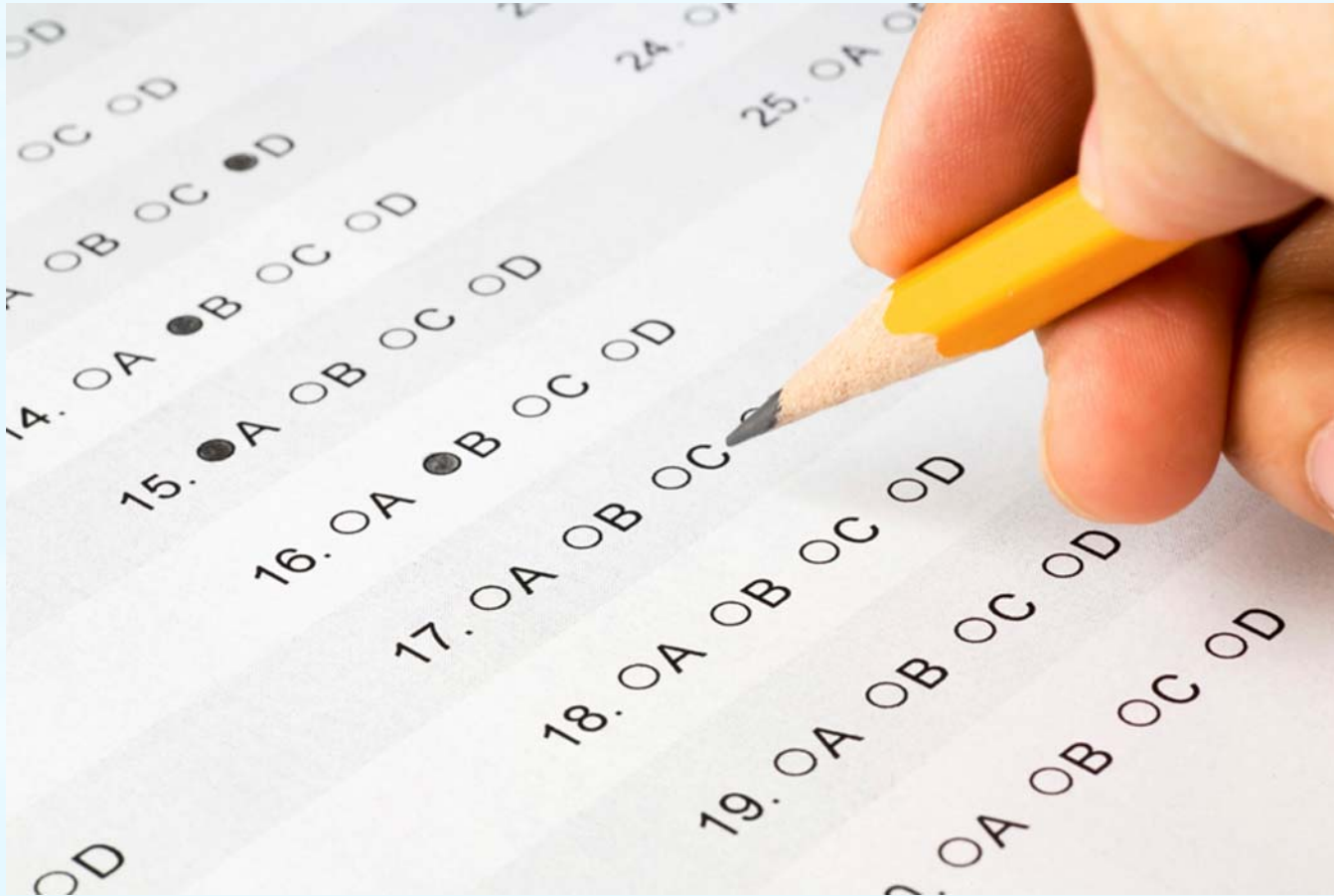
## *The Completion Rate*

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) developed a formula as a practical way to calculate a completion rate after studying a variety of calculation methods.

This estimated cohort method utilizes both dropout and graduate data and can be calculated for all accredited schools, but requires data from four consecutive years.

	Dropouts					Graduates 2006-07	Completion Rate
	Grade 9 2003-04	Grade 10 2004-05	Grade 11 2005-06	Grade 12 2006-07	4-yr Dropout Total		
<b>Overall Total</b>	314	410	494	465	1,683	10,126	85.7%
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	175	212	273	279	939	5,065	84.4%
Female	139	198	221	186	744	5,061	87.2%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>							
American Indian	131	115	88	66	400	786	66.3%
Asian	1	2	3	4	10	128	92.8%
Hispanic	12	11	11	12	46	206	81.7%
Black	4	4	4	3	15	49	76.6%
Pacific Islander	1	1	0	1	3	16	84.2%
White	165	277	388	379	1,209	8,941	88.1%

# *Advanced Placement, PSAT & SAT Data*



# 2007-08 Advanced Placement Performance & Participation Data

	# of Test-Takers	# of Exams Taken	# of Passing Exams
Total	2,406	3,741	2,416
Change from last year	+5.7%	+7.3%	+5.5%
American Indian	41	51	19
Change from last year	+24.2%	+10.9%	+26.7%

# 2007-08 AP Data by Subject/School

**19 passing AP exams by American Indian students**

<b>Subject</b>	<b># of exams</b>	<b>School sites for passing exam</b>
Eng Lit/Comp	1	Helena
Eng. Lang/Comp	2	Helena, Browning
Biology	1	Ronan
Studio Art/Draw	2	CMR, Fergus County
Studio Art/Design	1	Great Falls
Calculus AB	2	Sentinel
Gov Pol: US	3	Sentinel, Capital
History US	4	Wolf Point, Skyview, CMR, Senior
Chemistry	1	Havre
Statistics	1	Sentinel

# More AP Data

**26 non-passing exams by American Indian students**

<b>Subject</b>	<b># of exams</b>	<b>School sites for passing exam</b>
Eng. Lit/Comp	7	Bozeman, Chinook, Great Falls, Capital, Wolf Point, Malta
Eng. Lang/Comp	9	Hardin, Browning, Malta, Sentinel
History US	1	Hardin
Biology	5	Browning, Malta, Ronan, Whitefish
Gov Pol: US	1	CMR
Studio Art/Draw	2	Ronan
Statistics	1	Sentinel

# 2007-08 SAT Performance & Participation

## MT Overview – Reasoning Test Only

Total	2,648	
Change from last year		-7.8%
American Indian	40	
Change from last year		-29.8%
Asian	86	
Change from last year		+21.1%
Mexican American	31	
Change from last year		+34.8%

# 2007-08 PSAT Performance & Participation MT Overview

## Sophomore

Total	959	
Change from last year		+13.5%
American Indian	19	
Change from last year		+5.6%

## Junior

Total	4,873	
Change from last year		- 1.8%
American Indian	162	
Change from last year		-4.1%

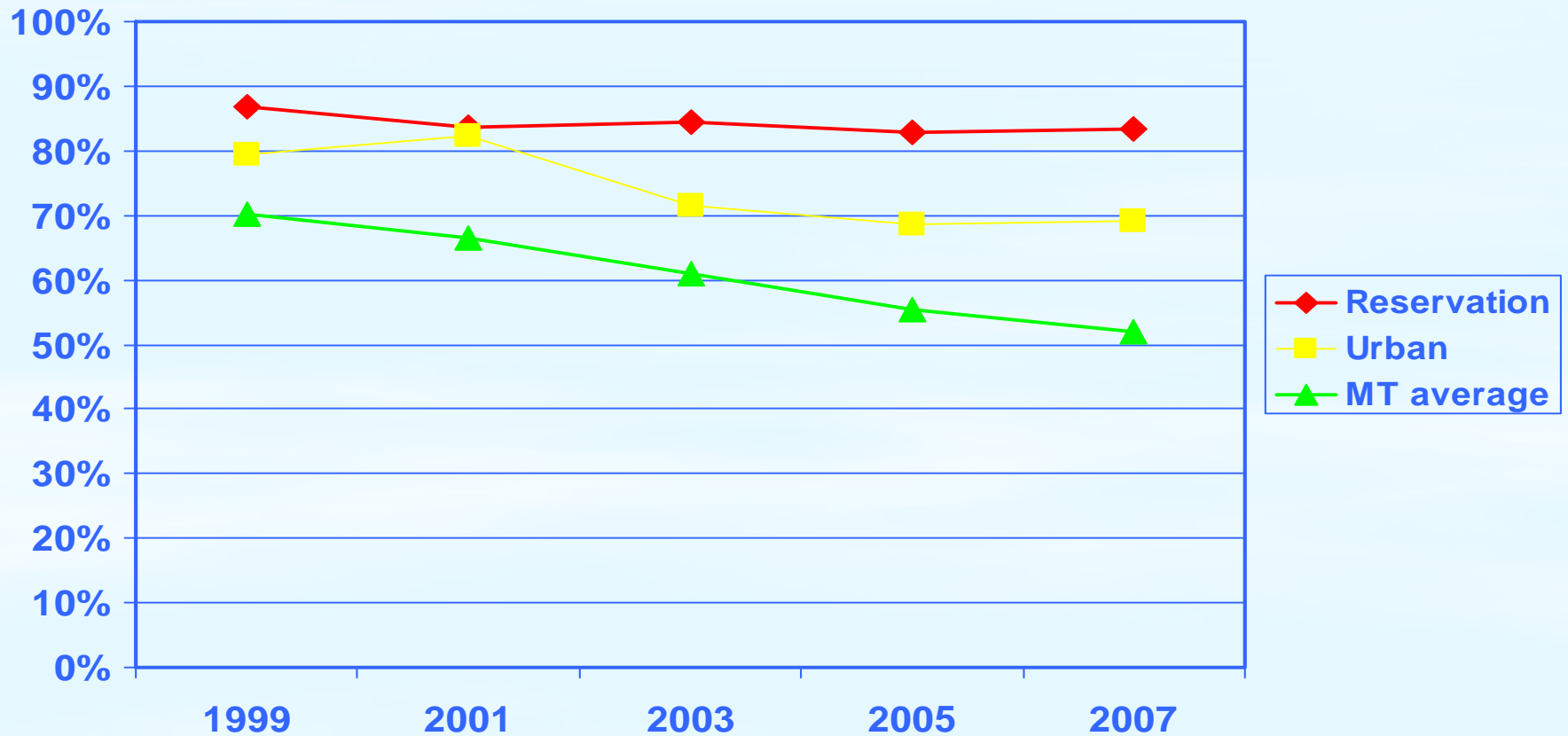
# *Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data*





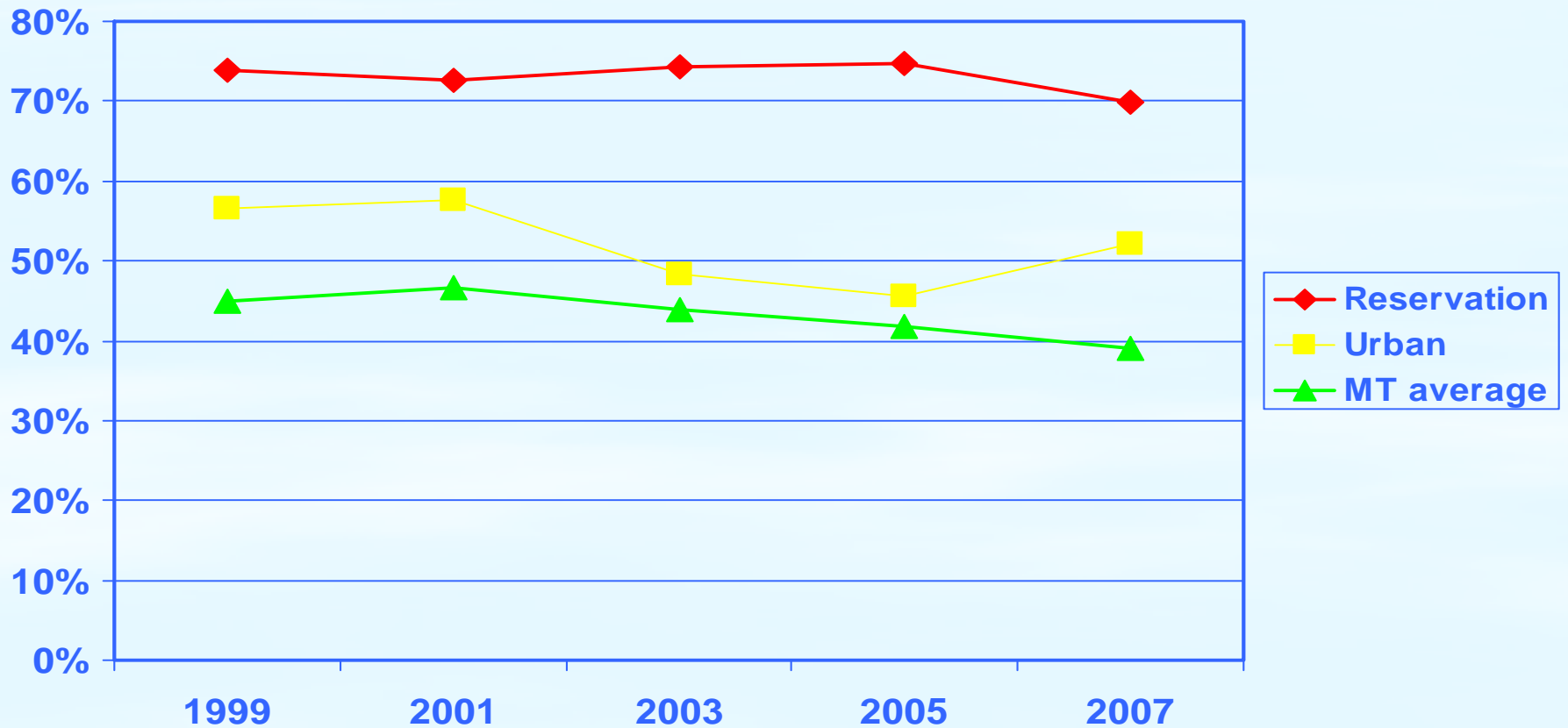
# YRBS data ...

Ever tried cigarette smoking:



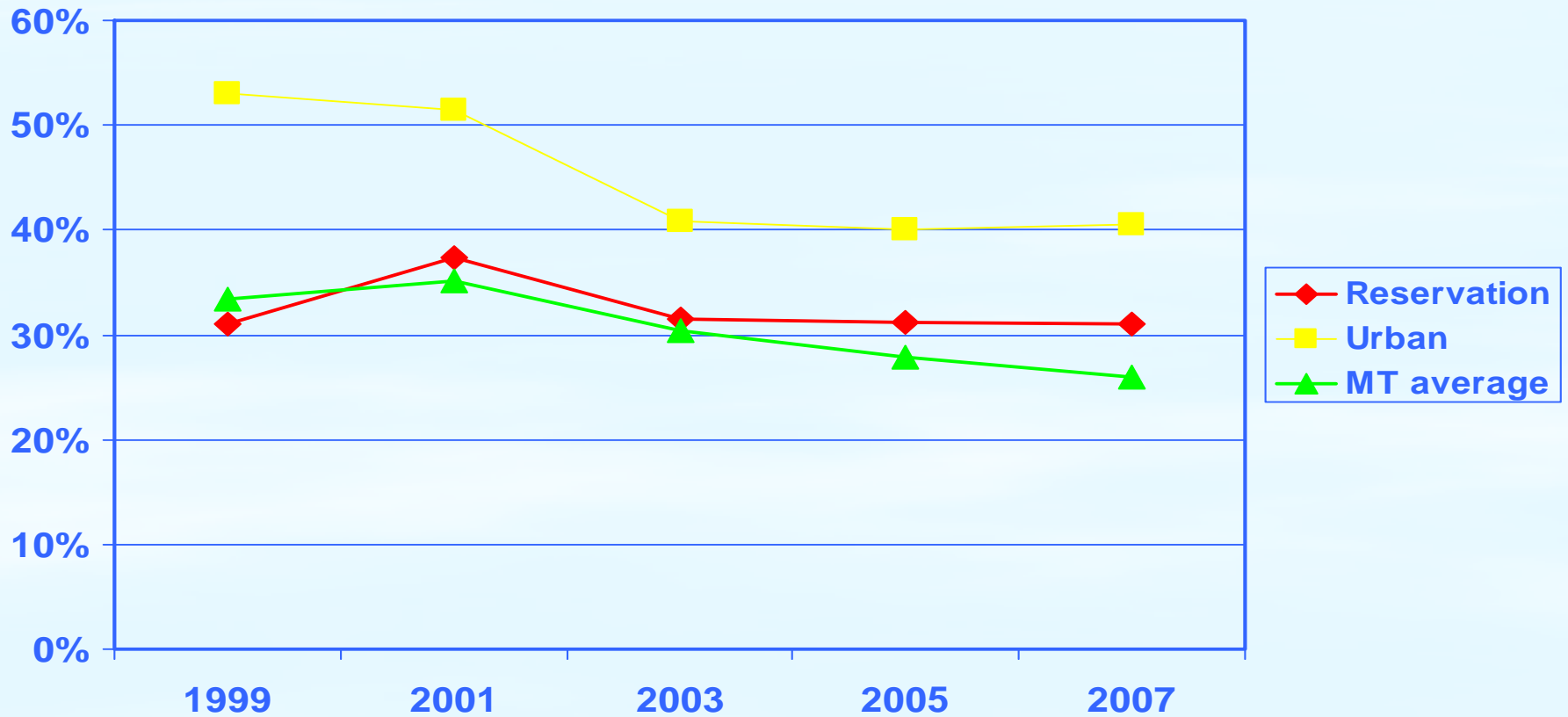
# More YRBS data ...

Used marijuana during their life:



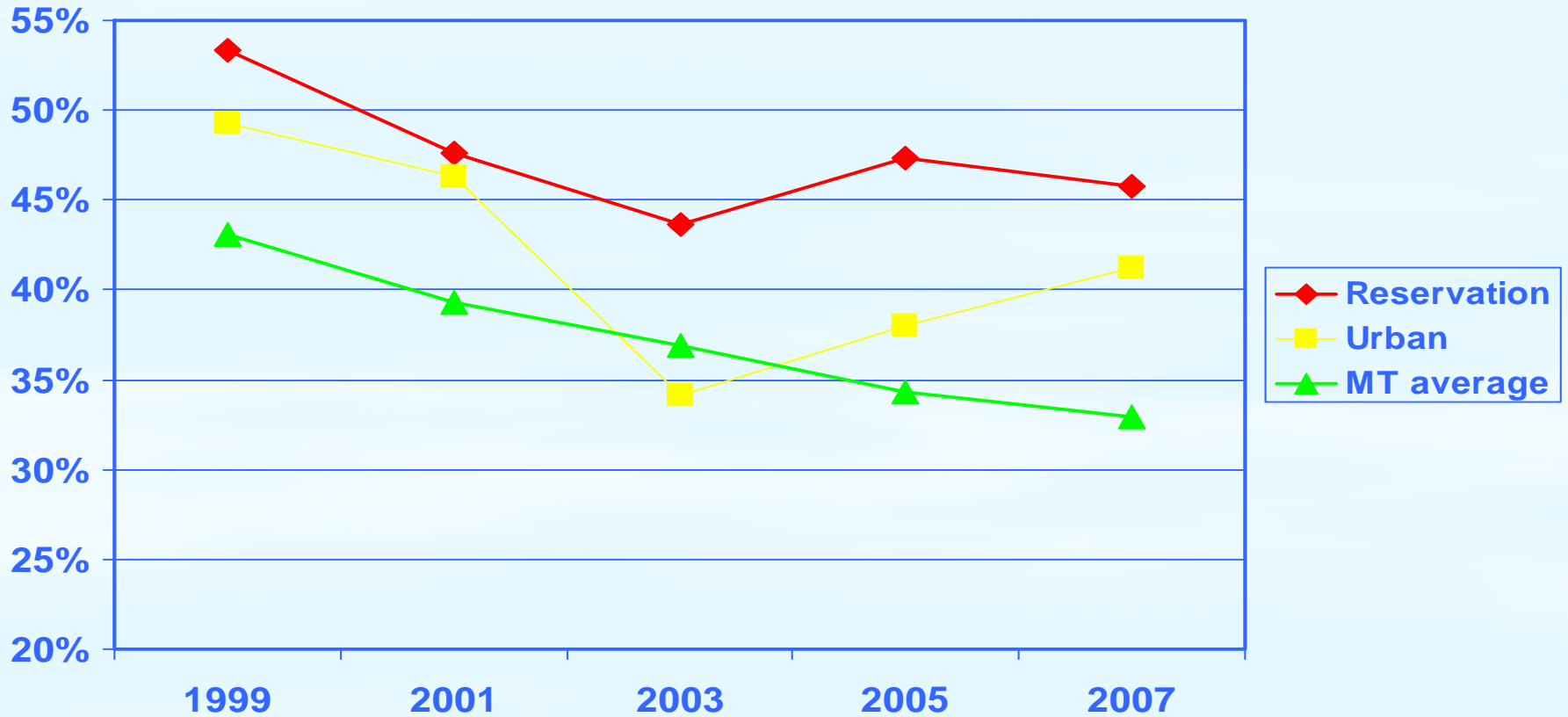
# More YRBS data ...

Had first drink of alcohol before age 13:



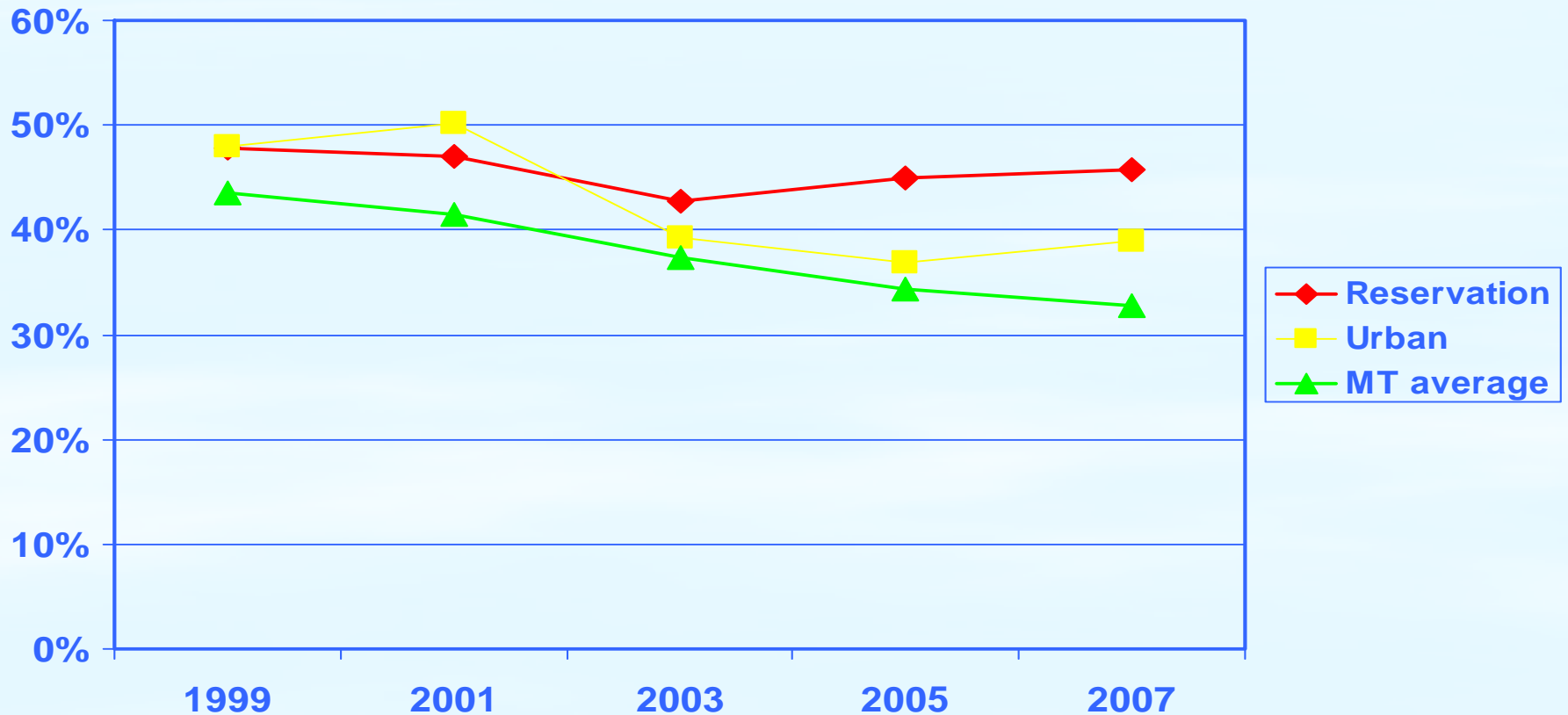
# More YRBS data ...

Rode in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol during the past 30 days:



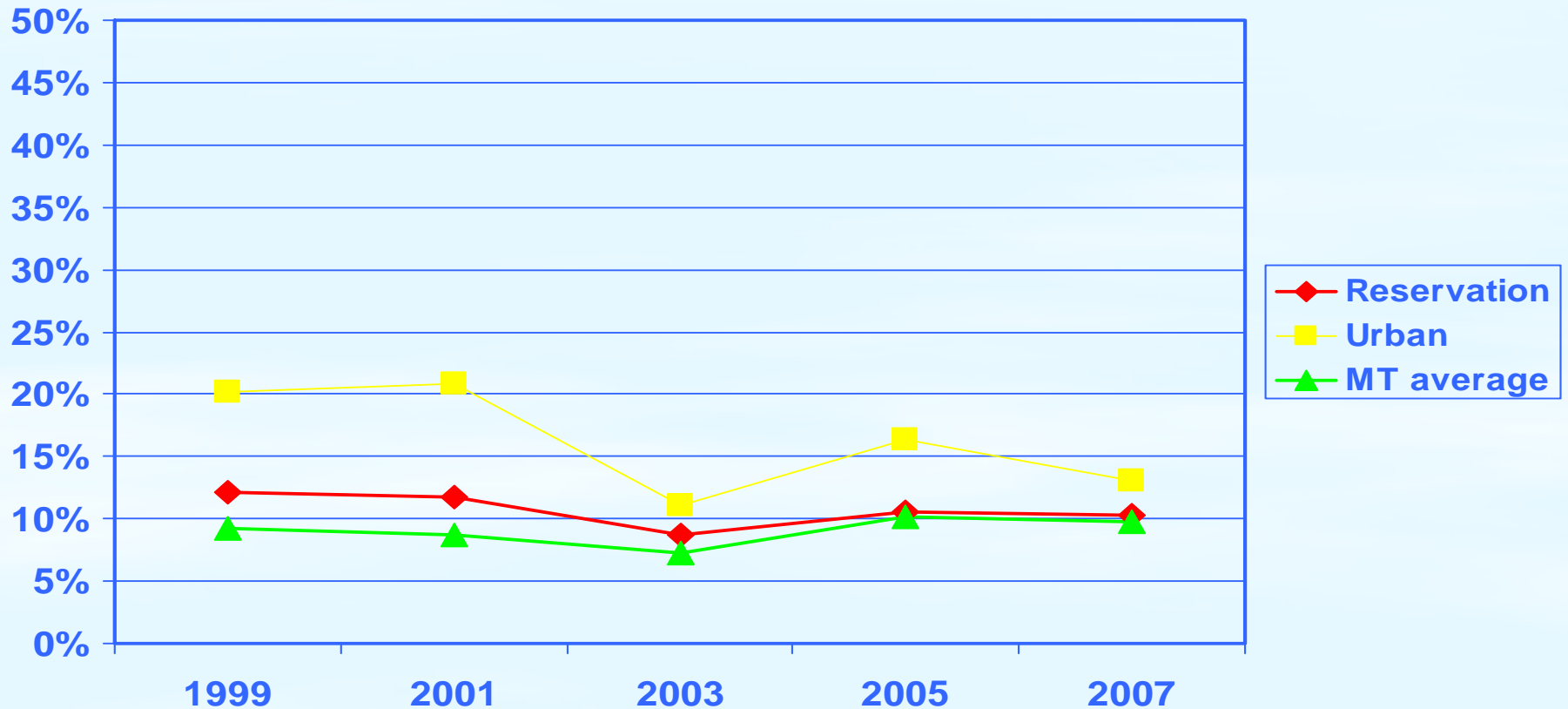
# More YRBS data ...

Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 day ("binge drinking"):



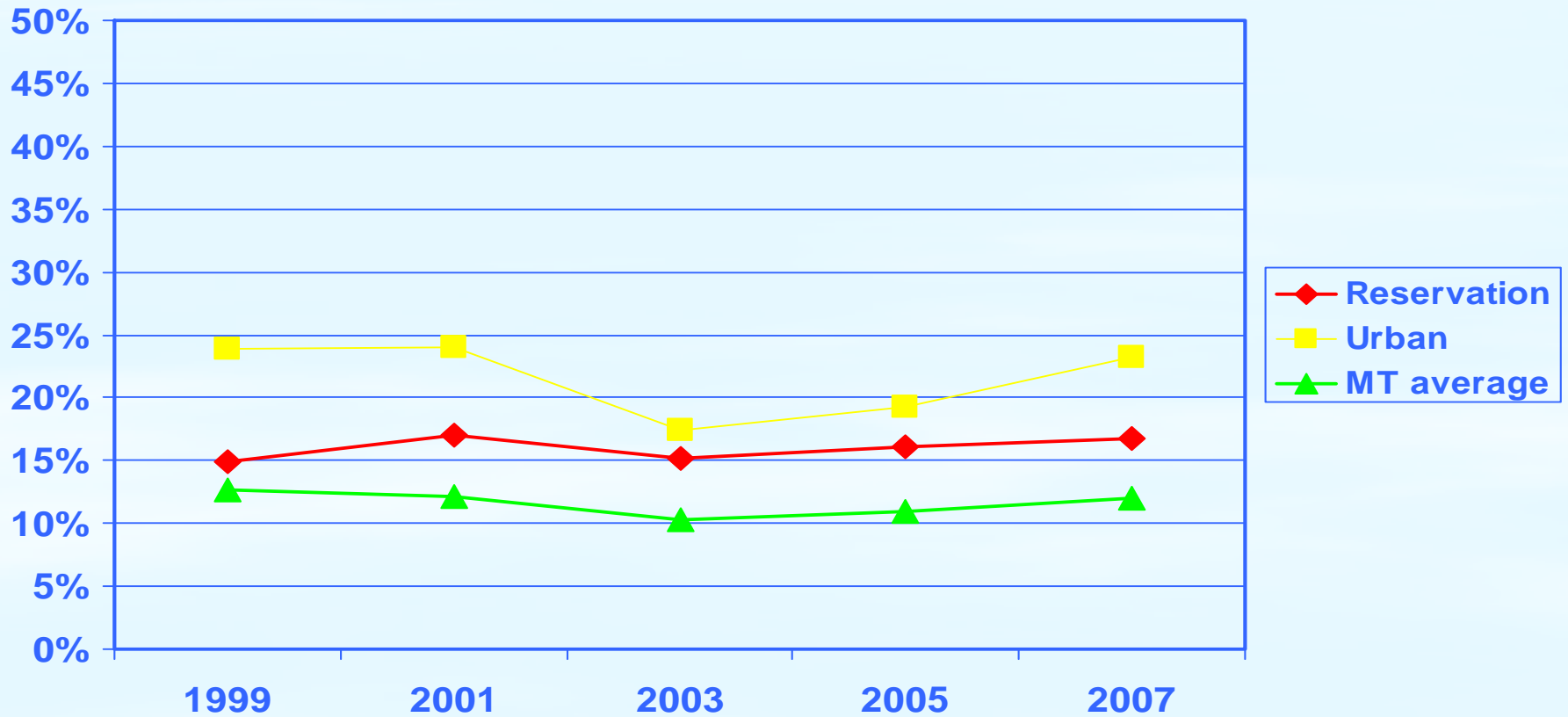
# More YRBS data ...

Carried a weapon on school property during the past 30 days:



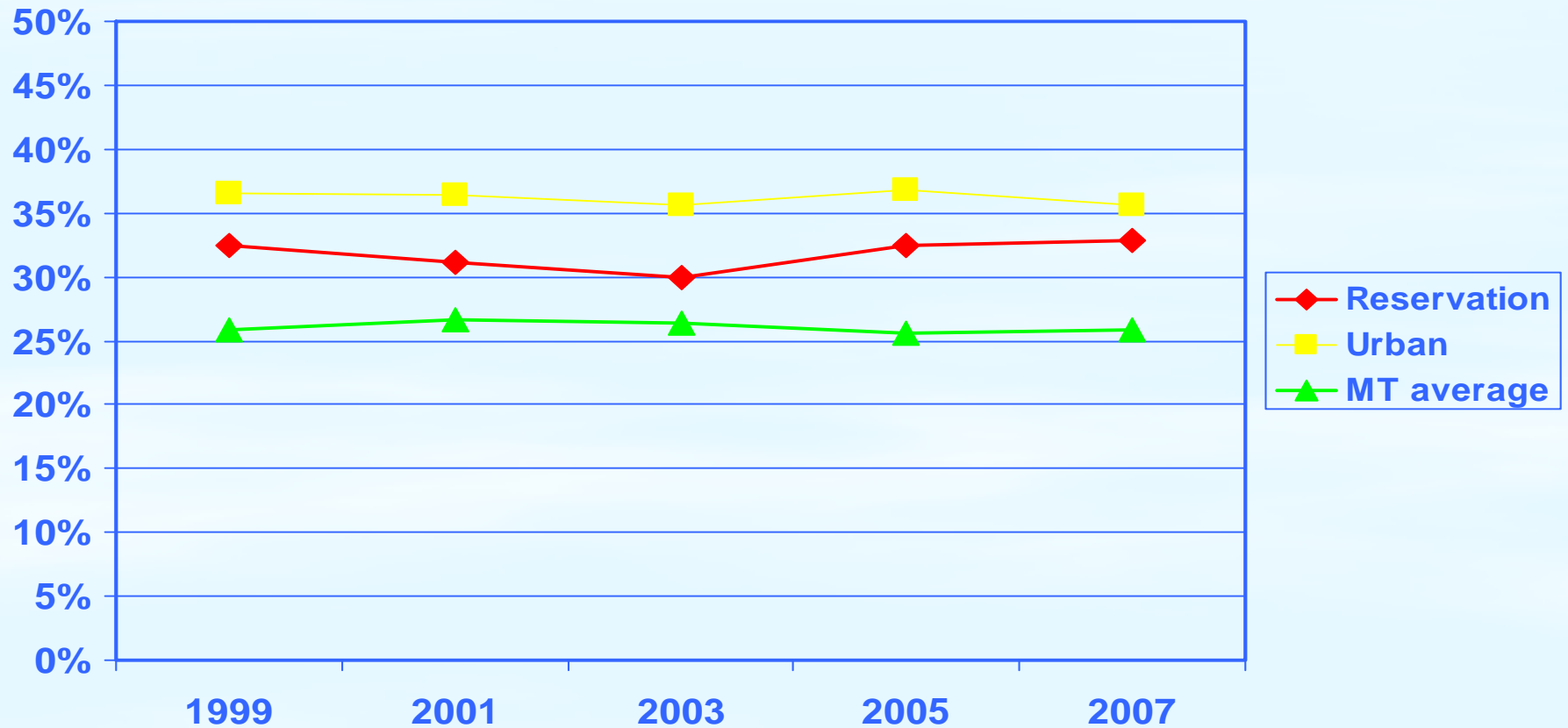
# More YRBS data ...

Were in a physical fight on school property  
during the past 12 months:



# More YRBS Data ...

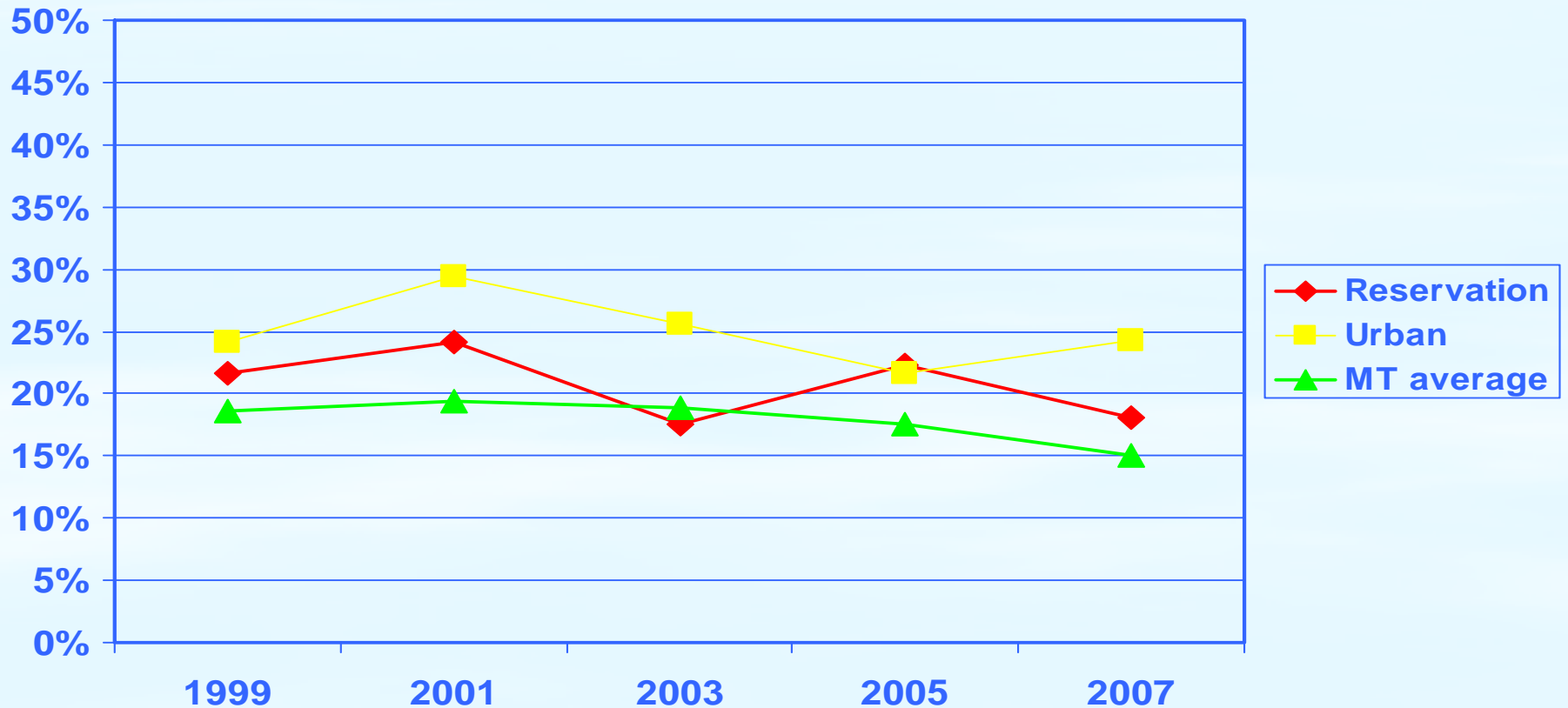
Felt so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities during the past 12 months:





# More YRBS data ...

Seriously considered attempting suicide  
during the past 12 months:

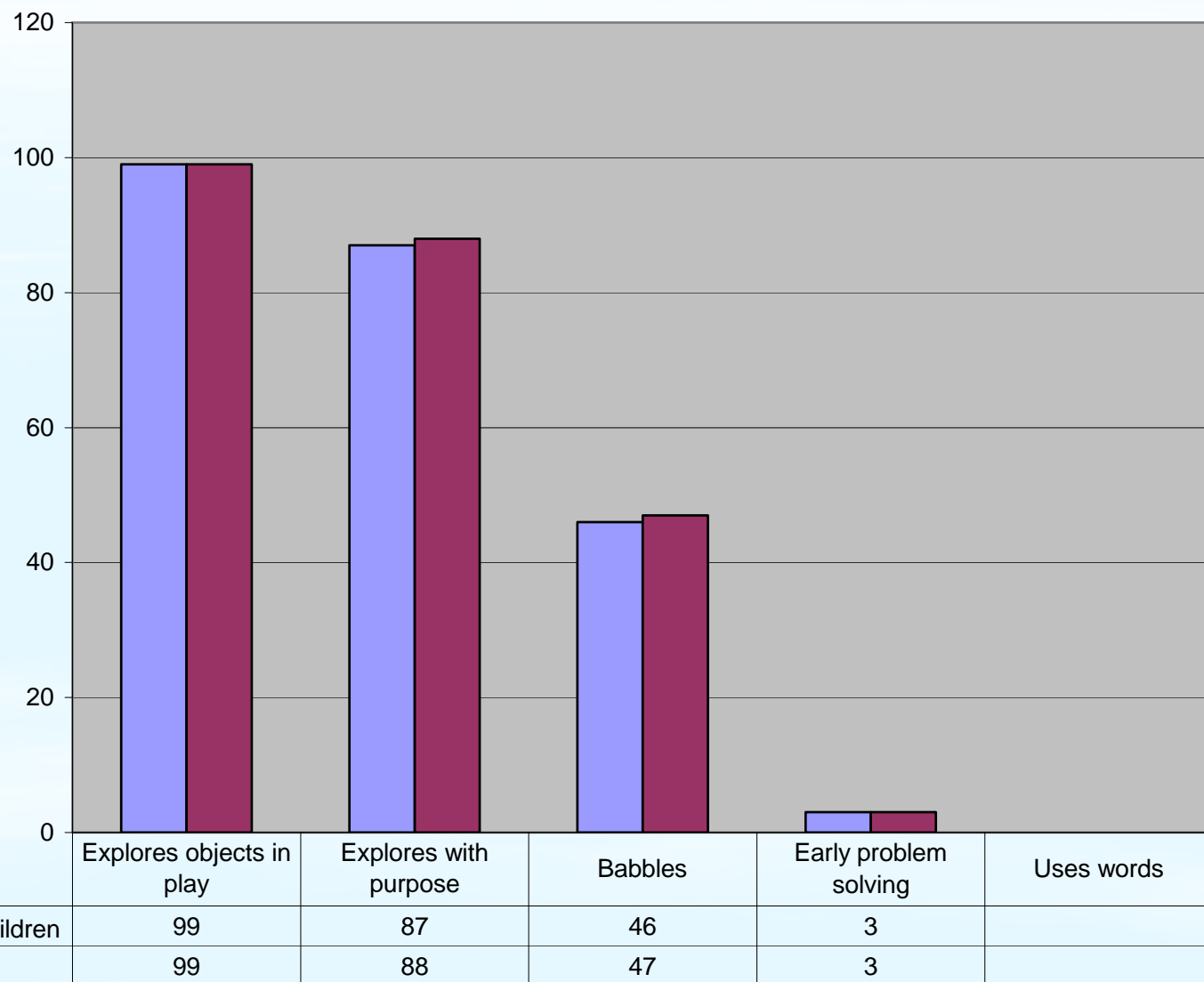


*Moving Schools Forward:  
What the Research and  
Best Practices Tell Us*

# Early Childhood Education

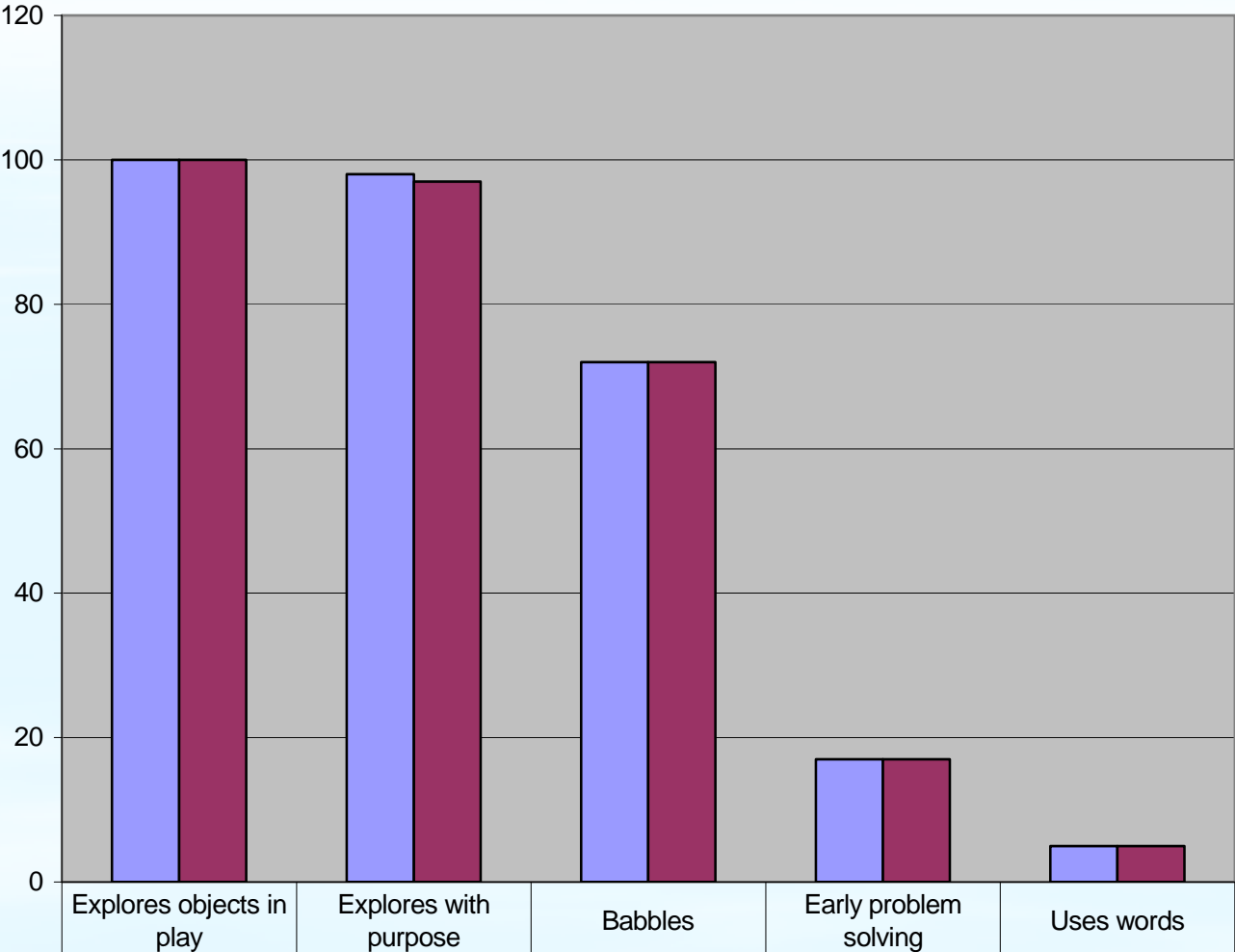
What do we do when children  
come to school already behind?

**Percentage of Children Demonstrating Specific Mental Skills, by Children's Age at Assessment, 8, 9 or 10 months**



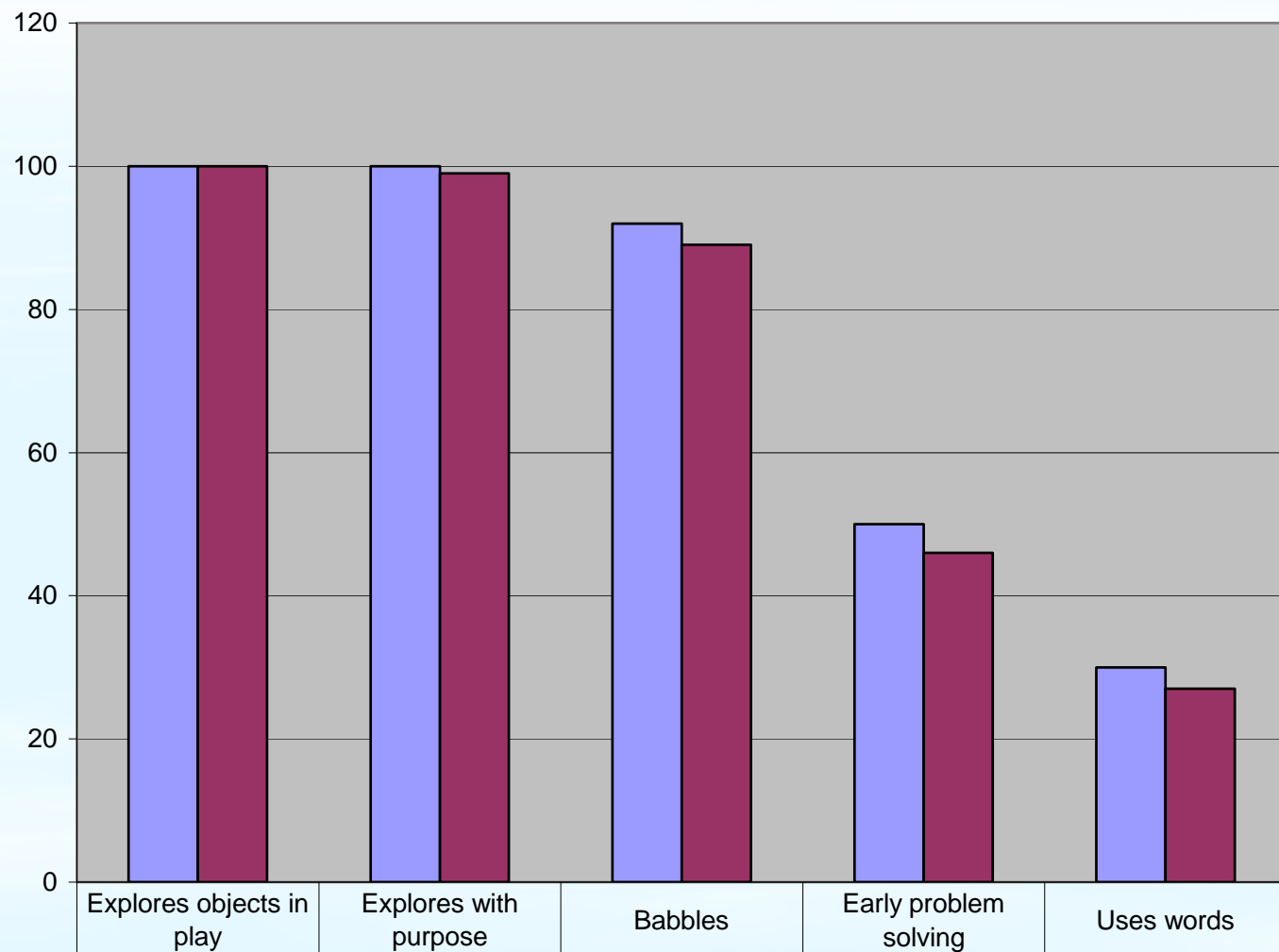
American Indian or Alaska Native Children	99	87	46	3	
All children	99	88	47	3	

**Percentage of Children Demonstrating Specific Mental Skills, by Children's Age at Assessment, 11, 12, or 13 months**



American Indian or Alaska Native Children	100	98	72	17	5
All children	100	97	72	17	5

**Percentage of Children Demonstrating Specific Mental Skills, by Children's Age at Assessment, 14 to 22 months**



American Indian or Alaska Native Children	100	100	92	50	30
All children	100	99	89	46	27

# What happens after 22 months?

- Children from lower income families hear half (620) the number of words spoken at home as compared to high income families (1250 – 2150)
- At these rates the low-income child will know about 3,000 words by age 6, while the child of the high-income family would have a vocabulary of 20,000 words.

# More on Early Childhood & School Readiness

***None of these statistics should be used to blame parents.***

Rather, we should use evidence of what works to rally and support all families to take full advantage of their tremendous opportunity to prepare their children for reading success.



# Early Childhood Education

- Create or increase opportunities for dialogue between Head Start programs and other providers who serve American Indians with elementary schools.
- “Head Start Impact Study” (2005) – US DPHHS
  - ✓ Researchers found positive effects on pre-reading, pre-writing, vocabulary and parent reports of children’s literacy skills.
  - ✓ At the same time, no significant impacts were found for the constructs of oral comprehension and phonological awareness or early mathematics skills for either 3 or 4 year olds.

# What can parents do to make their child school ready?

- Parents should invest 30 minutes daily for reading. When parents are unable, grandparents, neighbors, babysitters, siblings, and other adults should step in to serve as the child's designated reader for the day. It is an experience that children will form the foundation for all later learning.
- Have books, magazines & other reading materials in the home
- Build relationships with the early childhood, kindergarten teaching staff in your community and discuss what skills will help your child succeed most upon entering school – do this as early as possible!

# Leadership

In addition to creating a positive culture and atmosphere, the best principals are instructional leaders. They also create school communities that demand success.

“Learning for all – whatever it takes.”

Cal Gilbert, Principal Longfellow Elementary

# Teachers Matter

In order to close the achievement gap our schools don't just need good teachers, they need great teachers.

"By our estimates from Texas schools, having an above average teacher for five years running can completely close the average gap between low-income students and others."

- Researchers John Kain and Eric Hanushek

# Climate

- ✓ What is it about our schools that creates an environment where some kids want to come back for more and others don't?
- ✓ What are the environmental strengths in your school? How can you capitalize on them??

# High expectations

High expectations are always present in successful schools.

Successful schools all *demand* success.

# High Expectations

## Kindergarten

Based on our reading, draw a picture of an ocean animal that you would like to be.

# High Expectations

## Kindergarten

Based on our reading, choose an ocean animal you would like to be. Explain what you would look like, what you would eat, and what you would do. Why do you want to be this animal?



# High Expectations

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

Name and describe functions of the five body systems.

# High Expectations

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

Explain the difference between the systems of the body affected by an allergy to pollen and those affected by an allergy to food as well as the process by which different medicines reduce the symptoms of each allergy.

# Culturally relevant instruction

- Quality instruction has always incorporated local cultural values and traditions
- Students relate best to what they know
- Good instructional leaders can be a bridge for teachers and the local community and culture.

# Data-driven decision-making

Moving beyond hunches and hearsay

Using local level data to give us a full picture of student achievement

Who should be involved in data analysis?  
Administration, teachers, trustees and  
parents/community – ALL STAKEHOLDERS!

# More data to explore ...

Consider data from multiple sources, including:

- ✓ Local level attendance, tardy & mobility data
- ✓ Counseling and medical referrals
- ✓ Authentic, local assessment data
- ✓ Special education referral data
- ✓ Participation data in extra-curricular activities
- ✓ Climate data: student, parent and staff surveys
- ✓ Community profile data – parent involvement, economic and social data

# Student Support Services

- Individual education needs and goals
- Physical Health Needs:
  - ✓ Eyeglasses, flu shots, diabetes prevention, etc.
- Mental and Social Needs:
  - ✓ Crisis counseling, suicide prevention, career & college preparation

★ In all cases, a formalized referral process with adequate resources must be established and known by school staff and the community.

# After School and Summer School Programs

The gains experienced over the academic year do not evaporate when children are engaged in enriching summer school experiences.

Participation in enriching after school programs expands the context of learning in the classroom and exposes students to new experiences.

Ensure equity among participation rates.

# Service Learning Projects

- Service-learning can aid students in addressing community problems as a part of their classroom requirements <sup>1</sup>
- Experiential learning helps young people develop competencies for the workplace and adult life
- Service learning teaches students problem-solving, critical thinking, decision making, public speaking, teamwork and moral reasoning skills
- Service-learning in K-12 education has proven to increase scores in standardized tests, increase grade point averages, improve overall content knowledge and skills AND increase attendance <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Deepening Community-Based Learning Through Collaboration and Assessment," Dr. Jean Strait, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "Growing to Greatness" from the National Youth Leadership Council, 2007



# Parent & Community Involvement & Outreach

- Historical and social issues often keep American Indian parents from getting involved.
- American Indian community liaison's
- Shifting the paradigm ...

# More on Parents and Community

*National research tells us that students whose parents are actively involved in their education will:*

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

# What can parents do to become actively involved in a positive way?

- **Ensure that your children attend school every day and that they arrive on time**
- **Examine your strengths, beliefs and biases as a parent**
- **Learn about your child's learning strengths and styles, and how best to help advocate for them in the school environment**
- **Envision, plan and implement changes you want to make at home, in schools and in their community**
- **Remember that communication is a two way street and you should contact the school & administration with questions or concerns**
- **Support your student while also supporting school policies and procedures.**

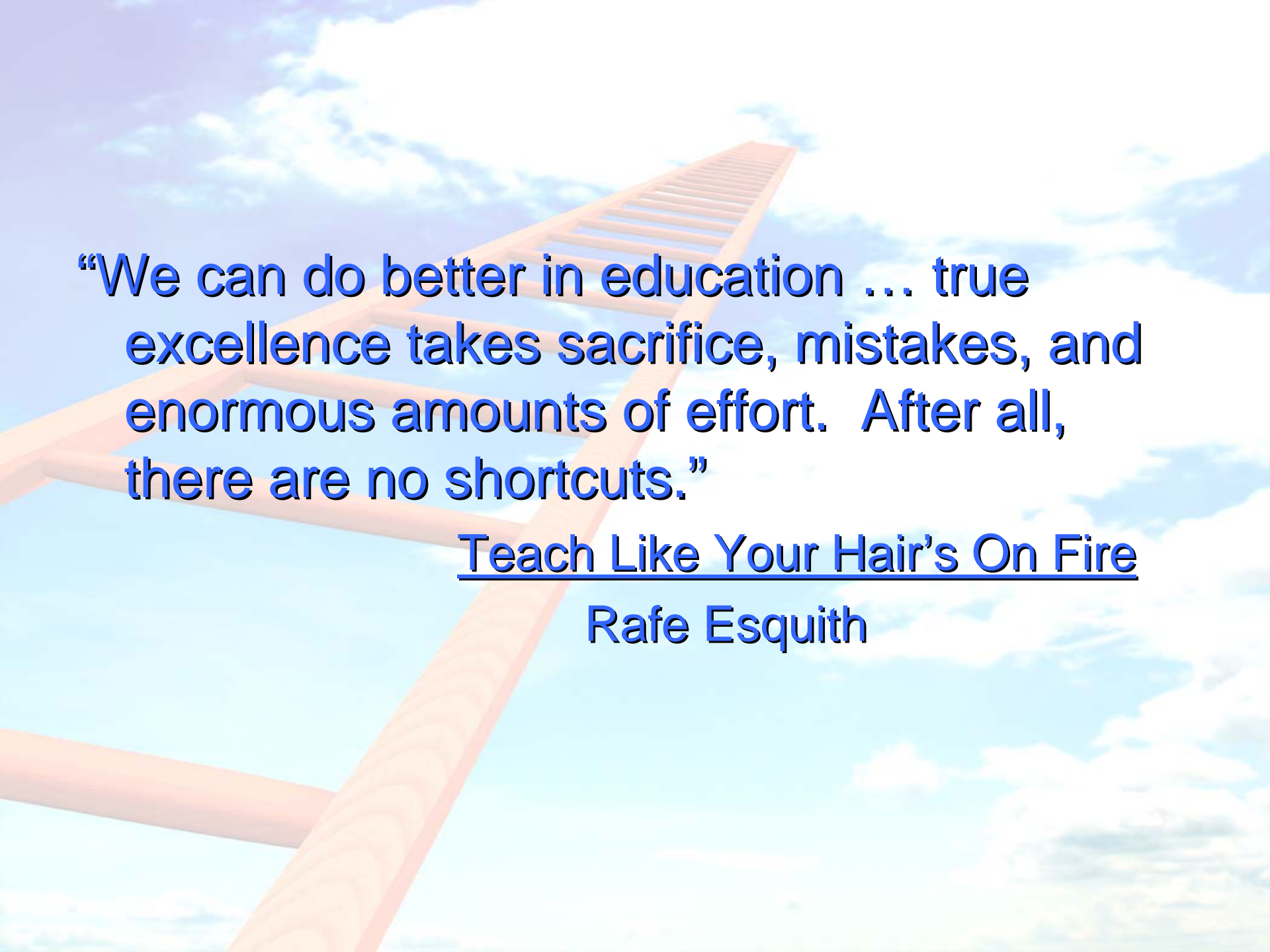
# What can schools do to foster greater parent involvement?

- Build productive, personal relationships with parents of all of their students
- Two-way information should flow in many forms between school staff and parents about student academic achievement & individual needs
- School staff should encourage & expect parents to be involved in school improvement decisions and to assist with them.
- School staff ensure that families have multiple learning opportunities to understand how to support their child's learning

# Other ideas for schools to foster greater parent involvement ...

- Understand the school climate – survey students, focus groups, etc
- Extend learning time, especially in Language Arts, Math and Writing to bring students up to grade level
- Include ALL community stakeholders (Tribal government, health care providers, law enforcement and judicial entities, business community, etc.) in discussions and strategies
- American Indian community liaison's or children/family advocates

We must **ALL** commit  
to the vision and the belief that  
our students can succeed.

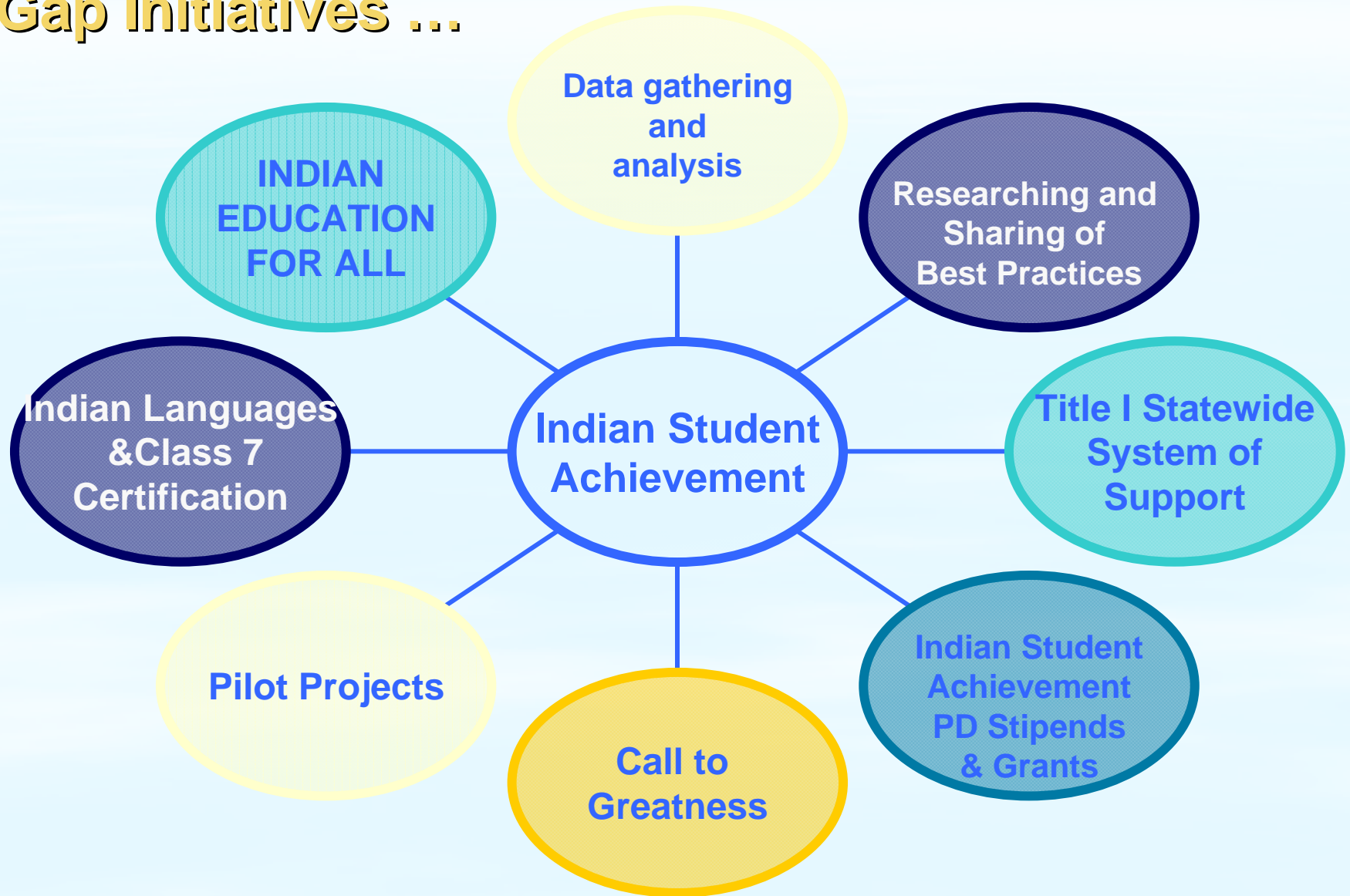
A wooden ladder is leaning against a blue sky with white clouds. The ladder is made of light-colored wood and extends from the bottom left towards the top right of the frame. The rungs of the ladder are visible, and the sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

“We can do better in education ... true excellence takes sacrifice, mistakes, and enormous amounts of effort. After all, there are no shortcuts.”

Teach Like Your Hair's On Fire  
Rafe Esquith



# OPI Achievement Gap Initiatives ...



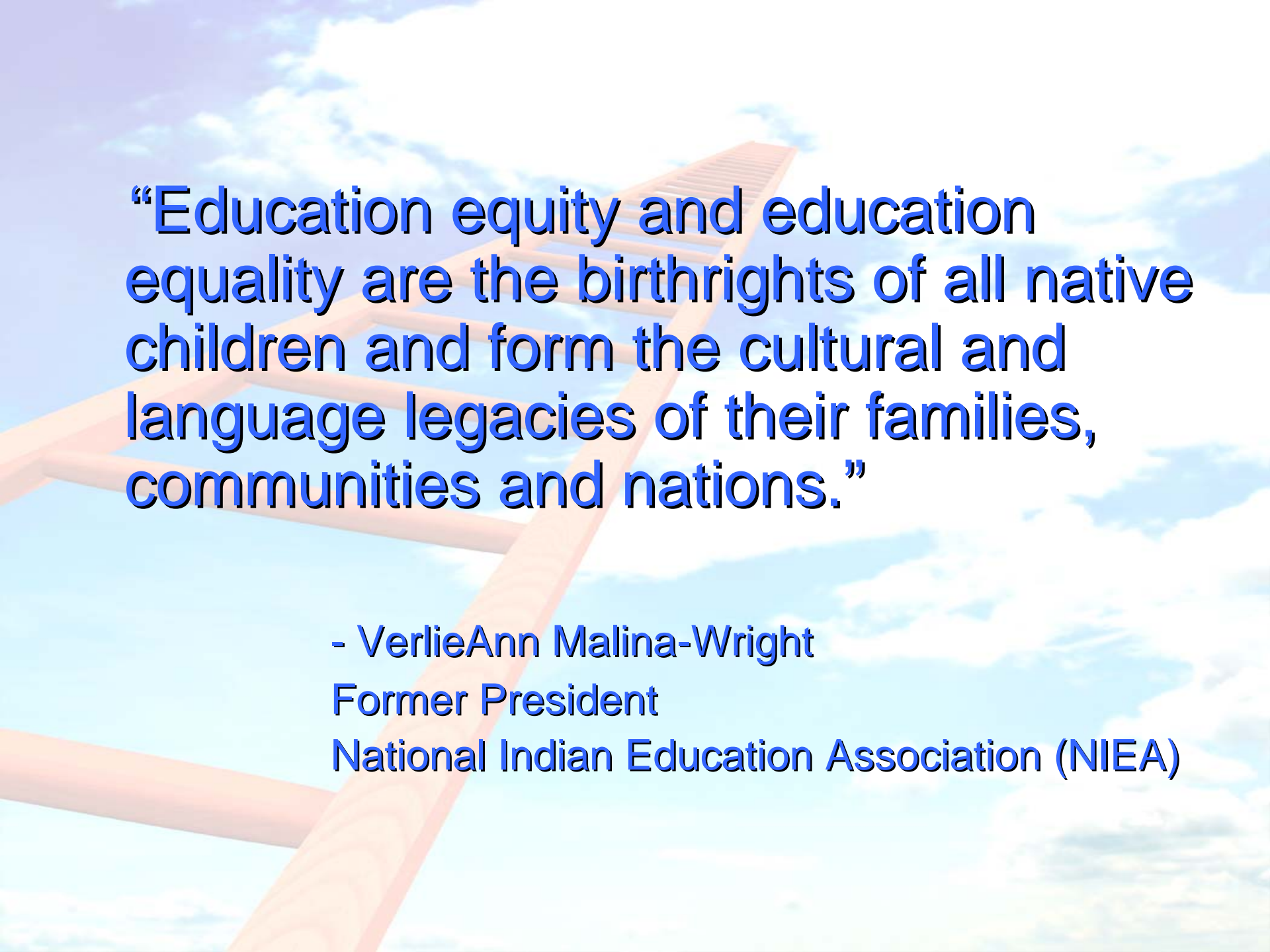


# Visit our website or contact us!

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[mbroaddus@mt.gov](mailto:mbroaddus@mt.gov) / **444-3013**

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd/Index.html>

A wooden ladder is leaning against a blue sky with white clouds. The ladder is made of light-colored wood and is positioned diagonally across the frame. The text is overlaid on the image.

**“Education equity and education equality are the birthrights of all native children and form the cultural and language legacies of their families, communities and nations.”**

**- VerlieAnn Malina-Wright**

**Former President**

**National Indian Education Association (NIEA)**